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T O U R

TO

Y O R K .

THE
LONDON HERMIT'S
TOUR
TO
THE YORK FESTIVAL,
IN A SERIES OF LETTERS
TO
A FRIEND:

IN WHICH THE ORIGIN OF THE WHITE-HORSE, ABURY, STONE-
HENGE, SILSBURY-HILL, AND ALSO OF THE DRUIDS AND AN-
CIENT BRITONS, IS ATTEMPTED TO BE ASCERTAINED; AND THE
WHOLE CONCLUDED WITH SOME GENERAL HINTS RESPECTING
MUSICAL FESTIVALS.

'When an ATHENIAN STRANGER of great age
Arrived at SPARTA; climbing up the stage,
To him the whole assembly rose, and ran
To place and ease the *old* and REVEREND MAN.'



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PUBLISHED BY A. BARCLAY, NEW BRIDGE STREET;
AND BALDWIN AND CO. LONDON.
1826.

DEDICATION.



TO THE PATRONS

OF THE LATE

YORK FESTIVAL,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

ADVERTISEMENT.



At the earnest desire of a Friend, the following pages (after having received considerable alteration from the original letters) are respectfully presented to the Public.

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LETTER I.



Wallingford, Sept. 3rd, 1825.

MY DEAR T——

No doubt you marvel how I can have been conveyed here by my little Shetlander, since we made our hasty arrangements yesterday evening at Blackheath. But to-morrow is a day of rest; and I was resolved to enhance its value by one of previous toil : besides, one is sometimes new fangled ; and this was my case in regard to the fascinating scheme which W. has suggested. The dawning was beautiful : so, ere the sun had risen, I backed little *Robin* ; and, with feelings almost allied

B

to earlier years, bade a temporary adieu to the vicinity of Langham Place.

The votaries of fashion—if *fashion* might now linger or exist amid the *September* smoke of the metropolis—had barely sunk into feverish repose: and, except the fine regiment of Guards, that had just quitted the barracks to exercise their horses, a few grooms similarly employed, and an occasional humble pedestrian, or

‘Dextrous damsel with the twirling mop,
That indicates the week’s conclusive morn—’

the park and streets appeared to be not only deserted, but almost desolate.

Something, however, there was in the pure breath of the morning, which more than compensated for any paucity of splendour and animation; and long ere I reached *Acton*, the little redbreast from every ‘*high-way side retreat, and suburban villa*’ of the citizen, cheered me with his sober autumnal song:—a song more in unison with my down-

hill of life feelings, than the vernal carol of the soaring lark could possibly have been. Thus serenaded, and musing on the various topics of social argument, and 'social converse,' which occasioned 'the flow of soul' of the preceding evening, I ambled leisurely along, till the incessant rattling and passing of the morning stages, in the vicinity of *Uxbridge*, obliged me to pay some attention to personal safety; and to look in vain for some quiet green lane, along which to prosecute my *tour*, contemplative and alone, or socially by the side of the simple villager.

From the inconveniency of dust, indeed, the excellent enactment of watering the road near the metropolis, had hitherto proved a sufficient specific; and half a dozen miles to the west of *Uxbridge*, I took the first opportunity of bidding adieu to the suffocating clouds that now revelled, by plunging into a secluded lane on the left; where, unmolested and at leisure, I proceeded by the

half pastoral, and not unpleasing village of *Marlow*, to the town of that name.

Here

‘The great father of the British floods,’

with his barges, groves, and villas, attracts the attention of the traveller; and continues an animated, yet peaceable companion of his route to *Henley*. But assisted by the politeness and pilotage of the young relative of a neighbouring admiral, I avoided the town, and somewhat abbreviated my pony’s toils, by turning short to the right, through some gateways; which soon brought me into the old (Brentford) road to Oxford. The change in the manners of the lower orders soon became striking.

Within twenty miles of the capital, the female disdains even to tread the fragrant produce of the meadows. In the vicinity of Wallingford, two interesting looking rustic beauties were busily employed, and so late too as six o’clock in the evening, in the servile drudgery of spreading dung heaps.

Need I add, that the heart that could set so much feminine loveliness to so unseemly an employ, was almost as much pitied as the head that caused the wealth of the fold-yard to be thus exposed to the action of the air and a scorching sun, from the conclusion of one week's toil to the commencement of the following.

At my present inn, a meeting of the magistrates obliged me to occupy a large, uncomfortable public room, during my dinner hour. Here two *knowing* youths seemed rather disposed to discuss the poetic merits of '*the (once) dear devil of misanthropy,*' than to furnish me with such local and antiquarian information as I was desirous to obtain.

The *hermit's private* sentiments, my dear T. respecting the bard who, it has been said, 'has concealed in laurels the lustre of the *British coronet,*' you have already some knowledge of. Taste, and even genius, must

be allowed to the author of *Childe Harold* :
and

‘ I grant there’s something in it,
That virtue has th’ unguarded minute.’

But, is poetry that ‘*plays round the head,*’ only, like the spleenful lightnings, to terrify or to destroy, ‘*but comes not near*’—or rather scathes ‘*the heart,*’ on which it never, like the sun of heaven, shed benignant radiance—can such poetry be called the production of a mere *unguarded minute* ? Is it not rather the deliberate labour of hours—of sleepless nights—and misspent years ? And did his Lordship ever devise one plan for the improvement and happiness of that world which he insulted—for the healing of those hearts which he too capriciously lacerated ?—or ever redeem his want of philanthropy, by one single patriotic line or action ? Nay, with all his poetic merit—with his laurel-shaded coronet—did Lord Byron ever pen a *couplet* equal to that eulogy of the noble

river, upon whose banks I write ; which, a hundred and fifty years ago, attracted so much of Dryden's attention ?

‘ Though deep, yet clear ; though gentle, yet not dull ;
Strong without rage ; without o’erflowing, full.’

And as to *originality of style*, in his works of humour, old Denham (in his *Dialogue*) seems entirely to rob the author of Don Juan of that wreath, and still to remain unequalled by his imitation.

Ever yours,

W.

P.S. A little *smut*, like old Sir John's, certainly possesses this advantage over fastidious spleen, that the least over-dose of the former is nauseous, and rarely fails to disgust : whereas, self-love too often induces us to feast on *misanthropy*, till the morbid state of the mind betrays the insidious nature of the poison it has imbibed.

—Adieu to *love*, and *fame*, and *hope*!—and not unfrequently to that Reason, given by a benignant Providence as a rudder to steer us clear of the rocks with which we are surrounded.

Should poesy ever induce you to quaff too deeply of the *forbidden spring*, (and, to be candid, I sometimes almost fear that you may,) timely *doses* of our friend *Isaac Walton*, along with *Thompson*, *Addison*, *Sir Walter Scott*, *Campbell*, *Washington Irving*, *Field Sports*, and *Musical Festivals*, seem preferable to the '*Pills to purge melancholy*,' recommended by the Spectator: and melancholy he will assuredly become, who is often *alone*, and makes Lord Byron the companion of his *solitude*.

N.B. For Sunday *regime*, old *Jeremy Taylor*, *Blair*, *Allison*, and public Sunday devotions, though we should hear little *new*, seem a most essential *addenda*.

LETTER II.

September 4th.

MY DEAR T——

Your promised *mementoes* I have procured this morning from the Post Office. Agriculture and rural improvements, it is to be regretted, have certainly been on the wane, since the death of the late king. And with regard to antiquarian lore, I also agree with you, that it is not merely useful and amusing, but, in some degree, essential to the right understanding of History. To his skill in Military History, and Military Antiquities, Napoleon Buonaparte was no doubt indebted in no inconsiderable degree, for many of his brilliant achievements. And much is it to be desired, that some of our *Stars of Nobility*,

and *Bond-Street Loungers*, would make the *gout* of Fashion veer a little more in this direction. How delightful and healthful a mode of spending, in antiquarian tours and excursions, the beautiful months of May and June ! What a zest would it not impart to the other portion of that period which *now* seems lingered and loitered in the Metropolis ! And what a scourge to fashionable ennui, what a solace to a rainy day in the country, the arranging of the treasures of information collected in the cheering, glorious sunshine, would afford ! And in the *November*, too, of Life, what a social in-door radiance would not such an amusement, and such a *Local Society*, diffuse around ! And Botany, Painting, Architecture, Sculpture, the military, and even civil professions, with Poetry, and Agriculture, all easily assimilate with, or are benefited by, antiquarian researches. Trust me, my dear T. so far as time will permit, I shall not fail to be an assiduous gleaner for

you, where far abler hands have already reaped and *housed* the harvest.

Wallingford—if you include the long, straggling suburbs of about a mile on the Oxford side of the river—is of considerable extent. Nothing can, however, be humbler than the mud hovels of which this suburb is composed. The traveller might almost fancy, as he enters it by the peaceable country road, that the era of Saxon architecture still continued. Imagination half conveys him back to the days of Alfred the Great: and he feels himself, as it were, approaching some town in the vicinity of that hero's country residence, in the more peaceable evening of his reign. But on passing along the handsome modern bridge, and entering the town itself, notwithstanding its strongly stamped features of antiquity, several elegant modern stone edifices tend not a little to dissipate the illusion. Here the Thames becomes a fine source of amusement to the angler; and

might seem to become the delight of the naiads themselves.

‘—So gay no banks appear,
No lake so gentle, and no spring so clear.’

In the latter respect it certainly amply justifies the eulogium of the Poet of Twickenham, and the old London historiographer, Stow. I had this morning the pleasure of sporting early in its pure, uncontaminated stream.

Occasionally the small Conger Eel has been met with here: but the fish chiefly abounding are Tench, Barbel, Roach, Dace, Chub, and Bream; the Gudgeon, Ruffe, Bleak, and Cray-fish, may be added to the list. The Carp, unknown in the Thames till the close of the sixteenth century, and not much earlier introduced into England, Stow conjectures to have made its escape, during floods, from the ponds of the Parks bordering the river. No Salmon (by an act of Elizabeth) under sixteen inches in length, can here be lawfully taken; and Pike are to be ten, Trout eight,

and Barbel not less than twelve inches.—A regulation, could it be equitably acted upon, that might now be extended, to the advantage of the community, and the satisfaction of your *brothers of the angle*.

At the west extremity of the town, near the turnpike gate, is part of the two sides of a square earthen fortress, or station; apparently once of considerable strength. The ditches, still filled with the waters of the Thames, now supply the Tan-pits on their margin. Though the toils of the Roman legions seem here legibly stamped, the local name is evidently Saxon: *Kinne*, or *Kinny-Croft*, being merely a (Wessex) provincialism for Kine-Croft; and seeming clearly to indicate that its peaceful pastoral denomination must have been acquired among the peasantry, after it ceased to be occupied permanently as a military site or station.

The morning is so beautiful and serene, that I again sigh to have the pure blue of

heaven only above me : and *Wanstead*, the *Windsor* of the Anglo-Saxons, being but fourteen miles distant ; I am resolved, by a sort of Sabbath-day's journey, to attain that place for dinner and rest.

Ever yours,

W.

LETTER III.

Wantage, Sept. 5th. (Evening.)

Dear T.

This is the very region of antiquity. Every hill and path is stamped with its vestiges, or retains mementoes in its etymology. *Ash-way*, the name by which the neighbouring inhabitants designate a few furlongs of the road leading from Wallingford to Wantage, has received the appellation in consequence of the numerous earthen vessels containing ashes, that have been found (and even by persons yet living) in cutting ditches and repairing the roads.

This name (alone indicative of a place of sepulture) it receives where the road makes

an acute angle at the foot of *Wittenham Hill*, on whose top is a strong entrenchment, encircling, as I understand, nearly 150 acres. *Dorchester*, anciently *Caer-dour*, and the thorough-fare between Wales and the metropolis, is just to the north of this station, but on the contrary side of the Thames. *Asdon Camp* and *Blea-bury*, a military burial place in some war of old, are also in this immediate vicinity. . But of an ancient coin called *Chinning money* by the old peasantry, and generally known about half a century ago, I could obtain no specimen. Nor did antiquarian curiosity fare much better in its enquiries respecting the rotund mound called *Scuddamore-Hill*, that conspicuously breaks the range of the southern downs; and which excites an additional interest, in consequence of its being the first Druidic vestige that meets the eye of the traveller. One honest fellow, indeed, after scratching his pate, at last found out that *a great Captain, called Captain Scutchemore, was buried there.*

For the site of a Beacon-fire, called *Law* in Northumberland, and to which use the more elevated (parochial) Carns were in cases of need applied, this mound seems rather to have been designed, than for a place of sepulture. By the way, whence happens it that in the portion of the ancient Northumbrian kingdom, where the Celtic Fire Carn, or site of the Beal-taine fire, is termed a *Law*, that *car*, the Gothic for a fortification, and the Celtic for a city, (WELSH *caer*; ARMORIC *ker*,) has originally meant a *swamp* or *morass*; and is still generally so used as an adjunct local name of the marshes in the district alluded to; much in the same manner that it is compounded in the *Caer-Sidis*, *Caer-Sëons*, and *Caer-Deganwys* of Taliesin's Poetry, and the *Caer-Leons*, *Caer-narvons*, *Caer-gurlys*, and *Car-lisles*, of our present Cambrian and Cumbrian maps? *Car-raig* (considered purely Celtic by some authors) is also employed by the old Irish, to signify a *fortress on a rock*. *CAR* then seems originally to have meant any *retreat* or

place of *safety*. And to *have a care*, or be *guarded*, the language of the present day, clearly evinces it. But in the course of another letter or two, you will perceive an infinitely more important reason than the present obvious one, for turning your attention to this subject.

I think I have already hinted that this is the route to exercise the curiosity and judgment of the antiquary, or the lyre of the poet, rather than the pencil of the artist. The broad plane which extends itself to the eye when you are nearly equi-distant between this place and Wallingford, is deficient both in the charm of fertility, and the sublimity of extent or immensity : and the range of downs that narrow the view to the left, are any thing but beautiful or grand. The quiet isolated appearance of the neighbouring villages and hamlets, embowered in orchards and well wooded hedgerows, notwithstanding the acute angles and abrupt terminations of the con-

tiguous fields, is not however, on the whole, unpleasing : and to the north there are some tolerable peeps of White-Horse Vale, and I believe of Oxfordshire.

With regard to *agriculture*, it here seems to languish. The utility of their stripes of quickset, Sir John Sinclair himself would hardly be able to discover. They are not placed round a field, or patch of aration ; but along one or two—or, more correctly, parts of one or two of its sides : and these portions, were even dead fences continued round the patch, would be completely inefficient, till gaps or chasms, occupying as many roods as the struggling quicks, were first repaired. *Cattle* here are *invisible*.

With the approach to *Wantage*, I have felt peculiarly gratified ; yet the cause of gratification seems not easy to define ; and probably has chiefly originated in mental associations ; such as accompany a lowly Hermit's ascetic

contrast of the gorgeous streets, and palace-like terraces of modern London, with the unostentatious, secluded, and orchard-embowered hamlet on the traveller's right;—scarcely, indeed, indicated, except by the light wreaths from the cabin chimney. Yet on entering the town itself, there is perhaps less of the venerable Anglo-Saxon air of antiquity, than in Wallingford. In both, the principal inns have certainly no pretensions to the antique; but are of a truly modern and respectable description:—so much so, that I have passed the principal, or posting Inn, for one which I had some difficulty in finding. But how could the friend of an *antiquary*, and the *embryo author* of — do otherwise? From the *ALFRED's Head* it is, and from the very house or site of Alfred's birth, that the *Hermit of London* now dips his pen in the ink-horn; and writes and contemplates on the very spot, where *ALFRED THE GREAT* has written and contemplated before. The house, as I have already, I think, hinted, is

so built up in front, as to preclude a full view of the market place, near which it is situated. In other respects it is truly modernized and comfortable. Yet, comfortably as I now sit scribbling here in my elbow chair, I cannot help regretting that instead of a *Hostel* for travellers, a *Cathedral* or *University* had here been erected.—At any rate, a *College* or *Hall*, chiefly for the study of the Anglo-Saxon language, laws, and antiquities, would certainly be an appropriate tribute from the neighbouring University (of Oxford) to the memory of its immortal founder, or renovator.

In the morning I visit Lutcomb Castle. My worthy host's description of this place, or rather his *eulogiums* and expressions of *marvel*, must have induced a new-fangled antiquary to make a much greater *detour* than the proposed one of two miles, on my road to the WHITE HORSE. Besides, the volunteering of his services, and the promised beauty of the upland ride from thence to the

back of the famous *Steed*, have almost sunk the noble animal into a secondary object.

Yours ever,

W.

LETTER IV.

September 5th, Inn near Uffingham.

Dear T——

Accompanied by mine Host, I left the birth-place of Alfred the Great, with the rising of the sun. Wantage, in its immediate vicinity, and to the north, is not, even now, deficient in scenic beauty; and for the manly diversion of the chase, that hero's favourite recreation, seems to have been well adapted; particularly hawking: it being situated on the north-eastern extremity of those round, fenceless, and almost interminable downs, that occupy so large a portion of the shires of Berks and Wilts. Nor, from the lingering remains scattered within a few miles of the town, can the forest shelter once

have been wanting for the Boar and Stag : in his expert and dauntless wars against which, the dawning hero, according to an old historical eye-witness, acquired no trivial trophies. With regard to Alfred's modern Capital, (London,) the court once kept here seems also conveniently situated: and yet more so for Oxford, anciently called Ouse-ford, and the society of those sages and divines, whom this great monarch's wisdom and bounty had attracted to him, and placed there.

Two miles of gradual ascent from Wantage by the high road, and a bend to the right, over the downs, of about two furlongs, brought us to the entrance of what is there termed *Lutcomb Castle*: a vast earthen fortress, neither square like the Roman camp, nor circular like those ascribed to the Danes; but participating in the properties of each figure; with its entrance, like that of a Druidic temple, to the east: a circumstance (now the equinox is at hand) pretty accurately pointed

out on a level horizon by the newly risen sun. This, however, by no means can be considered indicative here of a British Dun, or *Dinas*. The site both precludes the four gate-ways of the Romans, and the western entrance usually ascribed to the Danes. The vestige of a slight fence, probably inclosing pasturage for the horses, seems to extend to the southward, for great part of a mile; and terminates in a point, on the margin of a forest, of which considerable vestiges still remain to a great distance, in almost every direction. At this point, is also a pond, or tank; amply stored with water, notwithstanding the unusual drought that has prevailed.

Having received the instructions of my guide, who, it seems most evident, had never either read of Cæsar's works before *Alesia*, or seen some of the immense fortifications that circumscribe whole parishes, in the direction of the *Picts-wall*, I now proceeded (*solus cum solo*) by what he termed a drove and

rampire road ; and which, though most probably the site of conveyance to the Aboriginal inhabitants, and never repaired since the creation, is still efficient as any under the immediate surveillance of Mr. Mac-Adam himself. This *rampire way* is no other than nature made. It is a portion of the downs themselves ; but rendered more smooth, verdant, and compact, by the wheel and tread of the traveller for countless centuries.

In countries so distant and dissimilar as the Lincolnshire Fens, and those elevated downs, the traveller is struck with some unlooked for similarities. In both places these roads are called *rampire* and *drove roads* : on both, the traveller proceeds direct for miles, as a point blank cannon shot, to the place of his destination ; unless indeed the distance in the Fens be considerable, then the figure of the letter Z may not inaptly delineate his route : on both, the tread of the horse on the stoneless road is noiseless as that

of the nightly thief; and springs, streams hamlets, forest foliage, and visible fences, and even visible water, seem, generally speaking, unknown to both. In the towns and villages of both districts, with some exceptions, there is also a general air of architectural antiquity, lowliness, and neatness:—they are mean, with an air of comfort. And yet, with so much seeming homogeny, how different are the ideas that each creates. In the Fens, I speak of their summer appearance, instead of the shepherd and his tinkling charge, you see the fisherman, nay even the boy, with his eel-spear or harpoon, tracing the countless, but weed-concealed ditches, that divide and subdivide every seemingly fenceless farm; and as you approach their amphibious towns, Dutch bridges, dikes, boats, fishing-apparatus, flooded meadows, roads fetlock and knee deep in water, wading peasants, sailing milkmaids, flocks of geese, and flights of water-fowl, often give an air to the scene which in this island is unique.

If the Fens of Lincoln and Cambridge seem to transport the tourist into the dominions of the Dutch ; many of the downs of Berks and Wilts, particularly towards Salisbury, bring forcibly to his mind the patriarchal descriptions of the Bible ; and the thirsty, woodless plains of Chaldea and the East. He sees the shepherd tending his countless flock, or drawing water for it at the lonely well : he looks around him—and all beside is silence and solitude, primæval turf and sky.—Where indeed I now found myself a 'pilgrim, the occasional sheep-pen, stubble-patch, or cattle shed, told me that man had recently been ; and the occasional Barrow, or Carn, by which I passed, and the road on which I travelled, that here also he had been of old.

For the primæval state of the country, a cause perfectly satisfactory now occurs : and my perception must have been somewhat obtuse, not to make the discovery sooner. Here, the want of water precludes either the

peasant, or the flock, from making a stationary abode: and though the high price of grain may have induced him more recently to patch the fenceless upland with aration, no sooner is its virgin fertility impaired, than it reverts to its original state again: and though he may here house the produce of his toils, he nightly retires to repose him in the village on the plain below.

But how are we to account for the vacant unvaried face, heavy form, and seeming ignorance, of the half migratory inhabitants?—Is it that the too-contiguous Capital has attracted, and continues to attract to it, the lovely, the wealthy, the enterprizing, and the gay?—At least such was the idea that circumstances brought more than once, like a dim-seen vision, athwart my imagination. Nor can I help further imagining, that those who remained to drudge, know enough, or rather, too little of the metropolis, to be entirely satisfied with their lot. In the season

too, there may be something unfavourable. The animating bustle of the harvest had subsided into a languid calm; after having exhausted by its toils, and the scorching rays of an unusually fervid sun, the peasantry of their spirits, and yet unrecruited strength. To their peculiar dialect and idioms, also, may be owing some portion of their seeming ignorance to a stranger.

But to resume the antiquary in this region so peculiarly his own—I had minutely perambulated and examined the remains of another fortress, close by the *rampire road*, and at about five miles to the west of that of Lutcomb, previously described; and was quitting the place, ere aware that I had been on *White Horse Hill*, and almost on the very back of the *Steed*; who, like the Elephant, may be said to carry a castle: for so the *earthen rampire*, or *balkum* of *Uffingham*, already alluded to, is denominated. This fortress, however, to be accurate, is rather upon the

head of the Horse than on his back; and is, in fact, exactly on neither, but at two or three bowshots distance.

Uffingham Castle, as it is still called, though the timber tenement (if ever there) "has passed away like a vision of the night," or its forgotten owners—is now a simple quadrangle circumscribed by a rude mound and fosse, indicative of considerable labour, but much inferior to Lutcomb both in strength and extent. Seven or eight acres may be the area included within these ramparts. The works of Lutcomb, if my idea and memory be correct, (for I find I have neglected figuring my estimate on the spot,) may be nearly thirty acres, and are also indicative of more military skill: unless *White-Horse Hill* once possessed a double rampart, and had the exterior one nearly obliterated during a siege.

Now for your "*gallant Grey*," respecting which, you say you are so anxious to have every traditional information I may be able

to *cater* for you; and above all, my own observations and conjectures as to the origin of this *Eighth wonder*, that has set, you tell me, all the researches of the antiquary at defiance; and from which the whole Vale, extending nearly from Farringdon to Abingdon, undoubtedly has, time immemorial, derived its name.

From the massive rampire of ancient wars where Alfred the Great himself had once reposed, or fought and bled in the midst of England's patriots and heroes, I must confess I approached a Monument, which you boldly affirm will outlive the Pyramids themselves, with feelings of awe and expectation, that ended in disappointment. I therefore made the necessary observations and enquiries, and descended the hill for a view of the whole from below, with as much celerity as the precipitous nature of the ground would admit of.

That a colossal *Engraving*, executed by the mattock and spade, should be viewed at a distance of some miles—as the peasants

recommend—I can easily conceive; and it is truly astonishing the harmony and proportions bestowed on the *Picture* by the intervention only of a few furlongs. My business, however, was not so much to see the object in its fairest form, as to endeavour to acquire information that might benefit the national undertaking now so peculiarly your *hobby*. I therefore hastened to find some public invitation to the traveller to rest and refresh himself. Both were needed; not only by the rider, but his steed: and I was moreover anxious to commit my observations, however insignificant, to tablets less easily erasible than those of my memory. These I purpose to transcribe, and make the subject of a future epistle more at leisure.

LETTER V.

Raodon, September 5th. (Evening.)

So perplexing is the shroud here hanging over each tradition of **ALFRED THE GREAT**, and each supposed relict of his toils, that no ray of antiquarian genius—at least like that of the *London Hermit*—will, I fear, be competent to penetrate the mists of time, that Danish and Norman policy have doubtlessly endeavoured to thicken.

Once, indeed, you vanquished me in argument; and successfully proved that you possessed a much better and nobler groundwork on which to raise your superstructure, than the celebrated *Gibbon*. And I certainly entirely coincide with you in opinion, that **ALFRED THE GREAT** is a worthier subject.

for the pen of the biographer, particularly the English biographer, than that with which the compiler of the *Decline and Fall* contrived to ornament so many pages.

Plutarch, however, rather than Gibbon, I hope you propose taking for your model. And yet, the more I behold of this region on which antiquity has so legibly left its impress, but time erased the superscription ; the more am I convinced that immortality is rather destined for the future Bard, who shall laud the deeds of *Alfred*, than for his Biographer.

‘ The POET’s eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven ;
And at IMAGINATION bodies forth
The form of things unknown ; the POET’s pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothings
A local habitation and a name.’

But to make a prose commencement of my promised observations relative to the celebrated WHITE HORSE. The position of the figure may perhaps furnish some food for conjecture to the antiquary. I allude to his

being represented in the act of flying or galloping from a hill, indebted probably, in some measure, to art, for its semi-globular regularity; and which hill still retains the name of the device once delineated on the standards of the ancient Christian Britons.

This *Dragon-hill* is only at about a bow-shot distance from the rear of the *steed*: and, when it is recollected that this neighbourhood was the grand theatre on which Vortigern, Aurelius, Ambrosius, Prince Arthur, Hengist, Cerdic, and Horsa, acted their military tragedies; there is much to perplex and bewilder, and almost to make the Antiquary imagine that here the Saxon *Steed* was vanquished by, and fled from the *Dragon* of the Silures.

Such, however, is not entirely the *Hermit's* opinion.

Here the Britons have probably fought with Rome—with each other—and with the invading Saxons. In fact, no one can cast his eye on the expanse below, and not perceive that the possession of the land was

necessary in war, in order to awe or protect it. But if necessary to the Romans or the Britons, must it not have been infinitely more so to the English, in the time of *Alfred the Great*?

Within a few miles of this fortress (of Uffingham) was the place of his birth, and the residence of his court: nor at a much greater distance is that learned seminary which his wisdom created. *Ashdown*, also, where the hero fought, and where the cowardice, or false policy, or treason of Burhed, the Mercian, obliged him to exchange a palace and pavilion for the shed of a cowherd, is in this immediate vicinity: and little doubt can be entertained——But perhaps I had better reserve my final judgment, till I see the other *White*, or *Pack-horse*, at Eddington.

One occurring and original idea, may however be as well now taken out of the custody of an old man's memory.

The *dragon* has usually been considered

typical of the *people* ; as the *horse* is of the nobility, or *equestrian order*. Thus we find even Demosthenes represented by Plutarch, as apostrophizing, on being expelled Athens in a popular tumult—‘O Wisdom ! whence is it that thou delightest in three such monsters, as a *dragon*, an *owl*, and the *people* ? Now, without pausing to notice the reverse of our present gold coinage, or the national legend of *St. George*, the struggle against the Danes may probably rather be considered the *struggle of the people*. What gives more than plausibility to the conjecture, are, the parties and the contempt into which the princes and nobles of the recently subjugated heptarchy fell, and divided ;—the utter impossibility of distant roving pirates—and particularly in the then state of nautical knowledge and skill—ever subjugating, *without the aid and revolt of the people*, this extensive, and then *warlike* kingdom ; particularly when the vengeance of France, Wales, and other nations, was simultaneously

provoked ; and must, without popular revolts, have frittered their strength and efforts to the most contemptible insignificance. History—the Danish mode of warfare—and the very name of the king's retreat, *Ethelney*, or the *Isle of Nobles*, leave little to doubt on the subject.

This *dragon-hill* strikingly resembles those cairns, or rotund mounds, on which the Druids legislated and officiated religiously, at the Beal-taine and other festivals ; and that (I presume) between Pill and Ramsey, where the demi-Irish and Icelandic Mankmen still assemble, in order to hear their laws annually promulgated. But whether it really contains any typical allusion in its name, to the era of Danish anarchy, and is connected with the contiguous representation of the Saxon symbol ; or whether it received its denomination at an anterior epoch, when the *White Horse* and the *Golden Griffin* led the marshalled ranks of Britain and Saxony into the field, had best wisely be left, at least for the pre-

sent, to your own researches and superior lore. Only it appears obvious, on maturer consideration, that the *White-Horse*, whoever might name the *DRAGON-HILL*, could *never be a work of the Britons*; much less executed commemorative of any victory of the Silures, ranged under the *Dragon* of Arthur, the son of Pen-dragon. The *final occupants* (the *Saxons*) would *never* have suffered such a trophy to remain to their dishonour; nor would their present *descendants* annually assemble, from a custom so ancient that they know not its origin, *in order to prevent its erasure by the gradual efforts of time*.

Every antiquary, visiting such a marvel, is expected to take up *cudgels* for one or other of his predecessors, or to suggest *something new* of his own. I have preferred the latter; and not merely because known to be the most acceptable to you and W. but I really fancied that it *might* be most advantageous to your undertaking.

Of the peasantry, I in vain enquired the

day on which they are represented as annually assembling, to carouse and groom their celebrated steed. 'May month' and 'Whissun-week,' were the brief and only responses that contained the least particle of information whatever. At last, I learnt from a neighbouring gentleman, that about half a century ago, (and previous to the cultivation of the common,) Whit-monday was the day of festival and of assembly, to clear away the encroaching grass; but that no time more specific than that of my previous informant, was now attended to. From this it appears, that the fitting season of a Christian holiday was selected; and that neither the *Beal-taine*, or Druidic festival on the first of May, (O.S.) nor the anniversary of any victory of Alfred the Great, can have had any probable connexion with the accustomed day of rejoicing.

When such were my difficulties on a subject occurring annually, you may easily conjecture that all further attempts amongst the peasantry to elucidate, by oral traditions,

the mystery attending the origin of this **WHITE HORSE**, must have been futile. In fact, my question, as to the annual day of assemblage, appeared to cause almost as much alarm amongst these simple boors, as though it had come from some one authorized to censure them for a neglect or breach of duty.

Having now sufficiently *stuffed* my promised diurnal package, the *Field of Ashdown* and surrounding marvels I propose to leave untouched, till refreshed by a night's repose, from the unwonted toils of the day.—A deficiency of accommodations obliges me to make a farm house my dormitory.

LETTER VI.

Rawdon, September 6th.

The importance, in a military point of view, of the upland regions traversed yesterday, at once accounts for the many remnants of the warrior's defensive labours, and the countless indications of his final resting-place. Here, or in this immediate neighbourhood, was the fate of England twice decided in a very brief portion of one Sovereign's reign.

Of the precise ground occupied by each respective army at the *Battle of Ashdown*, or of the previous camps and positions, nothing, however, quite satisfactory, was to be obtained. The spot on which the Danes and English joined battle, was pointed out to me, as the broken North-eastern slope of the

ridge, immediately south of the *Park*; a range extending level and uninterrupted for two miles towards the North-west. On the side looking towards *Ashdown Park* and *Alfred's Castle*, a great portion of this range is fronted near its top, with what appears to have been a defensive breastwork for the spearmen or bows; and at its further extremity (to the north-west) a short similar work seems to have screened a flanking file, or *sleeve* of archers, a bow-shot in advance; and placed at right angles with the front of the main body.

If *Alfred's Castle*, a rude rotund rampart of earth inclosing about five acres, was then an existing fortress, and in the possession of the English, the Danes apparently must have been drawn up behind the breast-work, half a mile distant, on the range described. In fact the English were almost always the assailants: the pirates seeking plunder and shunning blows till the time of Canute. To an army devoid of artillery, the attack, in

this instance, must have commenced under considerable disadvantages: and king Alfred, apparently, fully aware of this, seems to have endeavoured to obviate the fatal consequences, by assailing in flank with his left cornet, and attempting to turn the right of the enemy.

From the few *barrows* (not more than half a score) scattered over the field, and from their half oblong, half oval form, and other appearances; it may fairly be presumed that the following must have been the *unavoidable* mode of sepulture here adopted: and it seems also to have been that of all fields of battle in this Island about the same era.

Where the dead lay rankest, so many oblong graves, of about three or four yards by six or eight, were formed, as might conveniently contain the bodies, without the trouble of digging to any considerable depth. How the bodies were then placed, it is in vain now to attempt discovering. Probably they were

ranged and piled into as small a compass as possible, till the uppermost corses were at least level with the ground: for, independent of still existing indications, it is evident that a close package of the dead would be less trouble than deep excavation. The soil was then shovelled over, and it assumed much of the same form, as our larger potatoe preserves, or pits. This oblong form was probably preferred to a square, or circle, for the more easy casting of the soil. Nor could the bodies have been placed so compactly in the latter figure. Round these oblong mounds, termed *barrows*, there is rarely any deficiency of soil whatever: nor is there at Ashdown; though the slight trench which has furnished materials for the defence of the front ranks in battle, is still distinctly visible. The elevation therefore still retained by these barrows, must have been acquired by the close and deep packing of human flesh and bones alone, with the addition, probably, of a few horses and broken arms.

With the exception of one small barrow, almost on the back of the *White Horse*, and now nearly obliterated by the curiosity of the antiquary, these, on the Field of Ash-down, were the first observed on my route. But two or three miles to the south of the *Horse*, is *Seven Barrow House*; with the obvious origin of its denomination near. And between *Lutcomb* and *Uffingham Castles*, are several *Carns*, or circular mounds, two of them close by the road side, and at about half a mile distant from each other. The first I past, curiosity and the plow had nearly obliterated. Notwithstanding the whole population of the parish seemed gleaning near the second, nothing but its local name of *Moss Hill* could be learnt respecting it.

Whether the British slain have been here carelessly thrown into heaps and covered with soil, the *Beal-taine* fire periodically blazed, or the corse of some chieftains thus distinguished from the common dead; it is

impossible, without a previous application of the spade, even to conjecture. And other monuments of "*the olden times*," and nearer the Field of Battle, seem infinitely more worthy of attention.

The GREY WEATHERS, in almost any other situation, might have been considered the work of nature alone. Yet when we reflect that no masses of rock, similar or dissimilar, are any way else visible within a wide circuit;—except those which form *Wylam's Cave*, a mile to the north-east; and at *Abury*, ten miles to the south-west;—and further, the almost dubious state of a great portion of even these marvels, from the hand of time; and then call to mind the Celtic Tombs around, and the stupendous *Stonehenge*, not far remote; there is every reason to believe, with the better informed natives, that those immane blocks, which cover a space of almost half a mile by nearly a furlong, have, in some measure, been collected by human powers;

and, it is not improbable, were once the abode of those Druids, by whom the sanctuary, or *Grand Choir of Stonehenge*, was elevated to perplex and astonish the world.

WYLAN'S CAVE, at about a mile equi-distant from the *Grey Weathers* and the *White Horse*, and not much further from *Alfred's Castle*, and the Field of Battle, merits something more at large.

That it may have been indebted for its present name to some anchoret or outlaw having made it his abode, is nothing improbable. But the immense flat stone, resting on other three placed edgewise, so as to constitute so many sides of an oblong square, make (with the open end) an exact representation of the Irish *Cromlech*, and Welsh *Kest-Vaen*, or *Stone Chest*. The elevated and exposed situation considered, one might say that it had been used as an altar for sacrifice; the usual office assigned to the *Cromlech*. Yet the buried or sunk appearance, it must be confessed, is *den-like*; and

the vast blocks that almost touch the *Chest*, are grouped and sunk like the ruins of similar caves, rather than the fragments of a *Stonehenge*. It is a *wren-like* dwelling, or hiding place for a human being: and *Dryw*, I believe, signifies, or implies both a *Druid* and a *wren*. For a concealed *Tripod*, or residence of the *Oracle*, these *Kest-Vaens* seem perhaps not the least adapted.

HARDWELL CASTLE, about three quarters of a mile to the west of that of *Uffingham*, on *White Horse Hill*, and nearly a similar species of fortress, did not escape my observation. This tongue of land, peering on the vale, is, however, completely severed by human industry, from the wolds behind. This extraordinary labour, united with the natural and artificial defences on the other three sides, and the *well*, which its name and appearance indicate it possessed, must have rendered this fortress almost impregnable: and to have cut off all communication be-

tween it and the *White Horse Hill*, could not fail to cause the tenure of its Castle, or defences, to be transitory in a season of drought.

Within the deep solitary glen of this ruined fortress of *Hardwell*, for a *Hermit* to meet with an elegant and interesting young lady, engaged with a book, had in it no small portion of the *romantic*. The only result, however, after the mutual surprise, and the alarm of the fair unknown had somewhat subsided, was the intelligence of a quantity of *coins*, discovered a few weeks previously just in the vale below; on a domain, the princely gift, as I have been informed, of the Bishop of D. to his Lordship's nephew, Viscount B. This treasure, chiefly in gold, is however none of it of an era prior to the reign of our first Mary.

The few *coins* that I have been able to collect in these parts are evidently Roman; one excepted, which from the initial Saxon

E. and helmed head on one side, and the horse on the reverse, I presume to be Anglo-Saxon; and am not without the hope that it may prove *Alfred* himself; for Elfrid, if I mistake not, was the original orthography.

Of other *coins* found long ago by a labourer, on cleansing a pond at *Ashdown Park*, almost upon the *Field of Battle*, I could learn nothing more than was furnished by the lame description of the discoverer, out of whose possession they had immediately passed to that of the then Game-keeper at Ashdown. One piece (on which also was an impress) was of leather; with a small square central vacancy, "as if something had been taken out."

Leather money, with a square metallic centre, I have previously heard or read of. But whether Alfred himself was ever compelled to supply the Danish drain of the precious metals, by such a currency—a currency which may fairly be considered the parent of our present one of paper, may be

worth the investigation in a rainy November day.

Occupied with the sublimer relics of remote antiquity, the heavy, square, brick house—looking through avenues, cut in the natural and now isolated *Park of Ashdown*—my *antiquarian dignity* thought barely worthy of a passing glance. Amid these monumental remains of by-gone days, I had now lingered and ruminated, till the declining sun reminded me that to make Beckhampton Inn my dormitory, as once designed, would that day be impossible, without entrenching on those hours of evening comfort and repose, which, to the voluntary traveller, seem indispensable, and even in prospect give a zest to his toils. I was anxious, moreover, to prosecute my journey upon those interminable and trackless downs, so little explored by the ordinary tourist, in preference to the plain and turnpike. From a shepherd I learnt that, by *Birdrup* race-course, I might again

find my way down to the habitations of man; and that at Rawdon, which would be making a shorter detour than by *Swindon*, from the *rampire* and direct way to Abury, I should meet with the requisite accommodation of a country inn.

Here, and I believe you are aware of it, even the noble's carriage road to his country residence is often no other than the natural turf: and the good natured husbandman directs the equestrian indifferently in every direction, except in the season when his fenceless corn patches may be fit for the scythe or sickle. I had not, however, proceeded far over new-mown barley, turnips, and potatoes, (for in these uplands I observe that the scattered harvest yet lingers,) till I deviated into a farm road, or track, that almost imperceptibly led me into the plain. Villages I saw indeed at no very great distance: but these, I had understood, were destitute of accommodation for the weary traveller, and I was about

to pause in perplexity, at a multitude of transverse chalky tracks, when the welcome sight of a curling smoke attracted my attention. A few moments brought me to the side of a neatly painted, comfortable looking caravan: close to which, under a tree, a young, modest, and respectable looking couple, with at least half a dozen annual pledges of their affection, (for the oldest chubby-cheeked little fellow could not be more than six years old,) were regaling themselves with tea. The steaming kettle was suspended over a fire of sticks beside them; and not far distant a small, but well conditioned horse, grazed quietly in the lane. There was something pleasing, an air of domestic comfort and happiness, and at the same time of patriarchal independence, novelty, and variety, attached to this unique scene. Most completely was I at a loss with what class of beings to rank the truly respectable looking itinerant: if he may be termed an itinerant who never quits his own family and dwelling.

His avocations, by his own confession, even were various as the patchwork on Joseph's coat. "He did any thing for an honest livelihood: was a pedling merchant, and a mechanic; made and mended pans and baskets: books also, hare skins and rags, needles, thread, and tape he sometimes trafficked in:" and from his hale healthful look, and cheerful countenance, was, probably, equally well qualified to make or sing a glee, as to sell one. Some, however, of the many professions arrogated to himself, might pethaps be placed more properly to the *firm of Self, Wife, "little Jack," & Co.* Though there was nothing of the sloe black eyes, wily looks, and tawny complexion of the fortune-telling race about this family; the avocations of the hunter, fisher, and fowler, were probably also his. At any rate, his temptations to treat his family with a *sarled hare*, or the produce of a *night hook*, or *net*, could not but be manifold.

From a traveller of this description, every necessary information as to distances and the roads was soon obtained : and an hour's easy travelling placed the picturesque village of *Rawdon*, at about a mile's distance below, before my enchanted gaze.

The *Village* and the *scene*, to one who had passed the day upon the naked downs, appeared no less welcome, than new and fascinating. The broad disk of the western sun nearly rested upon the leafy horizon behind. To the right, foliage and fertility mantled over the extensive plain, glowing in the radiance of the departing beam. To the left, half the village, with its mingled orchards, groves, and church, was elevated on the back of a picturesque hill to an Iberian altitude ; that made its spire and the loftier trees almost range with the downs, that abruptly terminated by its side. The other half of the village was only to be distinguished by the light and gracefully curling wreaths that

rose from the renovating evening hearths of the leaf concealed cottages: giving, by its gentle motion, a quiet animation in fine keeping with the rest of the scene: whilst, far above, it floated like a silvery lake; and imparted breadth and richness to the orb that brightened it with his beams. In unison with the landscape were the living objects, amid which I began slowly to descend along the road: the home returning team and harvest wane; the cottager with his full uddered cow; a group of rosy, happy, home returning girls and boys, just let loose from the village school, beneath the care of a *tidy* servant maid; and the little *Robin* not recently heard or seen, with his sober vesper hymn, all formed a pleasing foreground, or accompaniment to the landscape.

P. S. I had almost neglected to say that I heard on my road here, the fragment of an old ballad, in praise of *Ormon the Great*: a great man of whom I had never heard till

now : and who, on inquiry, I was informed won *the Battle of Preston*, near Ramsbury. Of this victory, monumental vestiges still exist, according to my information. But whether this legend of *Ormon the Great*, like a preceding one of the *great Captain Scutchamore and his carn*, may be worthy of any other notice than a smile, is left to your *antiquarianism*, and W. for decision.

Pray do not neglect to present to him my kindest regards : and to manufacture for me on all necessary occasions, the usual *complimentary epistolary* conclusion : which lack of time or paper, *no forgetfulness*, generally causes to be wanting. When I next take up my pen, the wonders of *Abury* will have been before me.

LETTER VII.

Abury, September 6th.

A seven or eight miles' ride, not altogether devoid of rural and scenic interest, brought me to Abury ; over which Time, as over the pyramidal pride of the Pharaohs and the Sesostrises, has cast his shadowy and bewildering mists. Yet long ere reaching this far-famed vestige of primeval and *conjectured antediluvian* ages, the ramparts of war, and the tombs of heroes, rose frequent around. The latter reposed indifferently on the hill, the plane, the hollow, or the slope. Of the former, more was to be heard (I mean of the peasantry) than seen from the lowland road, on which I now travelled. And of the

sounds of *Sittington*, *Barbury*, *Binel*, and
Ouberon, I still retain the remembrance :

————— ‘ All massive mounds,—
 Stationed upon the hills ;—all ramparts once
 Of iron war, in ancient barbarous times,
 When disunited BRITAIN ever bled,
 Lost in eternal broils : ere yet she grew
 To this deep-laid indissoluble state,
 Where *wealth* and *commerce* lift their golden heads ;
 And o’er our labours *Liberty* and *Law*,
 Impartial, watch.—The wonder of a world !’

I regret that time did not permit me to ascertain whether these ruined fortresses are of the same description with those visited the preceding day. They occupy a continuance of the same upland range ; and are dignified with the same appellation of *castle* : but, like those inspected, consist, as I was informed, merely of a fosse and earthen rampire ; without the vestige of a watch-tower, or parapet. And if *Rath*, *Dun*, or *Pioidaid*, for the chief’s residence, was ever there, it must have been of timber only.

Such material forms, in fact, the usual dwellings of all wooded districts; and both Britons and Saxons generally parapeted with wattled stakes. For *Souterraine*, the usual retreat of the women and children in time of danger, and the secret depot of their provisions, I also looked yesterday in vain. These castles seem therefore to have been rather a chain of forts or stations, destined exclusively for war. Whether *Wans-dyke*, once the boundary of the Celtic and Belgic possessions, which passes, I believe, over those downs a little to the south, was designed to supersede their use, or as a check to their possessors, is merely a passing conjecture for your consideration.

To proceed with ABURY:—What shall I say of ABURY? Like STONEHENGE, to form any adequate idea of it, it should be *seen*. Yet with what different feelings do we gaze on these respective *marvels*! Here time—or war—or zeal—or sacrilege, has done too

much. The mighty stone masses are much too widely scattered, to strike forcibly as a whole, could they even all at once be presented to the view. This, however, the mingled hovels and stack-yards of the village entirely preclude : whilst the gigantic circular *frame*—for so the capacious, the mighty earthen mound may be termed, that, with an altitude of sixty feet from the moat, still circumscribes the ruins of Abury—rivets the beholder's gaze ; and occasions more astonishment than the remnant of the *picture* itself. At STONEHENGE, on the other hand, instead of many disunited views, or objects for the eye, you have but *one* ; and it is complete :—perhaps more so than if the temple did not bear the impress of the convulsions of nature, or the hand of time. SILSBURY-HILL indeed, at a few furlongs' distance, must have been once a connected accompaniment to ABURY ; and still gives it a balancing weight in the scale of interest and curiosity, with that on the plains of Salisbury. But on

Silsbury-Hill, you gaze only as on 'a pyramid ; for both it and the most striking part of *Abury* (the *mound*) are evidently produced by the persevering industry of man ; and existing men, and their dwellings, you see mingled and around.

But **STONEHENGE** stands single and alone, upon the solitary and trackless desert. And he who may be inclined to believe, that the *giants* of *Scripture* were *colossal* beings, rather than *great* and *renowned* men, like Homer's sons of the Gods, may well feel a disposition to think that these antediluvian *giants* alone could have reared and linked those enormous masses in the air ; and to say, (with Mr. Brown,) that they could have been rendered ruinous only by that *universal deluge* which swept the builders from the earth. The *mound* at *Abury* is undoubtedly paced with a feeling of sorrow and regret, as a monument of the ruined, futile toils of man, and of the once-famed dead ;—but the stupendous masses of *Stonehenge*, we gaze on

with astonishment, and with an awe bordering upon horror ; as on the creation of beings of a dubious or supernatural nature, that may even yet possess a shadowy and local existence.

LETTER VIII.

Devizes, September 7th.

Yours from —— I have just received. My own remarks, notwithstanding Mr. Brown's recent work, (on *Abury* and *Stonehenge*,) I certainly shall commit to paper, agreeably to your wishes; though they may most probably render 'no light, but rather darkness visible.' It was from the parish clerk at Abury—who squired the new-fangled *Antiquarian Quixote* in his diligent researches—that I heard of Mr. B.'s antediluvian notions: and for which, in fact, there is certainly some tolerably plausible foundation. But the idea of the obliterated *guide-posts* being like a serpent; or their

having any thing to do, in the typical way, with the *devil* and our *mother Eve*, (as the clerk tells me Mr. B. supposes,) is all *fudge* and *fid fad*; and seems of a piece with the *thunder*, with which the translators of the Book of Job have clothed the *neck* of the horse, and placed precisely where his *mane* should be. And even this *type of Satan* is not, correctly, supposed like a serpent after all; but like the two moieties of one; which have no more definite origin than *two or three* widely scattered fragments of stone, and the report of *two or three* more, that have, or *may*, or *must*, have been removed; and which, there can be little doubt, once served as *guide-posts* (instead of a *type of Lucifer*) to devotees and pilgrims, over these trackless downs.

The number of the perpendicular rude stones that once must have circumscribed *Abury*, or the greater part of the present village, with its orchards and contiguous inclosures; and, just within its fosse, traced in

very different, but equally legible characters, the full extent of its capacious orb, can now be conjectured only. Yet from many (of the most contiguous stones) yet remaining at the invariable distance of about fourteen paces from centre to centre, and from the next most contiguous distance—of which there are several remains and specimens—being one third more than the preceding, (or twenty-one paces,) it may fairly be presumed that they were once at seven paces equi-distant from each other. This admitted, the original number is attainable to a mathematical nicety, by means of the diameter. That the *lesser circle* of obelisks ever precisely resembled *Stonehenge*, seems doubtful. Even this species of sacred architecture, like that of all others, admitted of variety. Nor is it improbable, that one might be a specimen of the fashion of one era, people, or religious sect or denomination; the other of another.

The *unique* circumscribing MOUND AND MOAT merit more particular attention; and

furnish a spacious field for literary controversy, and antiquarian conjecture. I allude to the placing of the *fosse* within the *rampire* :—a circumstance at once annihilating any idea, that the defence of the inhabitants could be the origin of this primeval specimen of human toil. The most inexpert warrior never would have constructed such a defence, even on the summit of a rock, or in the centre of a bog. But here, where the level and firm nature of the surrounding ground rendered Abury approachable on every side, it is apparent that a nightly assailant might have been on the *rampire* before the garrison, though both had made a simultaneous attempt. And it is equally evident, that when the *rampire* was manned, the defendents could not supply the place of their slain, with so much ease as the assailants might occupy it. Neither can we suppose the whole a *Druidical device*, merely designed for religious *effect* ; since it must be admitted, this (*effect*) would have

nearly been twofold, had the trench been, as in all defences, outward.

From what motive, then, can this vast orbicular mound have been created ; that, very different from the internal columns, or those of its *brother-wonder*, (*Stonehenge*,) the most ignorant must have imputed to the united and persevering effects of human toil ? Are we to suppose that it was merely to be gazed on, during the time of worship, from within ; and that gloomy forests once precluded the exterior view of the mountain shepherd, and the passing traveller ? A more probable conjecture is, that *ABURY* was not intended, entirely, either as a place of *worship* or of *defence* ; but rather, of confinement ; a sort of *happy-valley* : not, however, for the princes of the blood, but the students in theology ; to keep them from the eye and the contamination of the world. But I have another, and yet more plausible conjecture.

You have heard of *Druidesses*.—Methinks I see your wonted arch look and intelligent

shrug. Nay, probably with the '*Phantom's sex*,' is vanished the sanctitude also of the far-famed *Abury*. But if you have e'en gone so far as to suppose that here might be the *Harem* or *Seraglio* of the Arch-druid, 'heaven mend your worse thoughts,' and aid you to put a bridle, and a *curb* one too, on your imagination. My own immaculate idea is, that here priestesses, pure as the Vestals selected by Numa, have officiated; and young maidens, equally pure, been trained up, and initiated in the sacred mysteries: and that here also 'the daughters of the great,' as formerly in our monasteries, were educated in innocence and peace. You must acknowledge, that some such institution can alone account for the internal strength and prison-like defences at *Abury*. To those *without*, the imputed sanctity of the place would add sufficiently to the difficulty of approach; but some more efficient barrier might, by the contemplative and sagacious Druid, be deemed necessary for the inmates;

many of whom occasionally may have been anxious to escape to the pleasures of the world. The *Druids*, as has already been suggested, might reside, or have a University not far from *Wylam's Cave*; amid the ponderous rocks and traditional ruins, by the remnant of the forest of Ashdown. In fact, these prostrate immane masses, and the almost contiguous *Cromleck* (or *Cave*) alluded to, seem, in conjunction with Abury, Silsbury-Hill, Stonehenge, and the countless tombs of the dead, to identify this region, rather than *Mona*, as the principal seat of the Druids. *Mona* might indeed have become so at the period of the annihilation of its groves and sanctuaries, when Albion was already in the possession of the Roman garrisons, and the priesthood had been previously compelled to seek safety by flight. But to *Mona* can we ever believe that the young nobility and intended priesthood of Gaul repaired, for—*education*; however much eloquence might be prized by the one, or the arcana of their

art by the other? Can it be supposed that such inexperienced navigators as the Gauls, with their frail vessels, could stem the dangerous seas of the Cyclades, or double Cape Wrath continually; or, which would be nearly as impracticable, prosecute a land journey through impenetrable forests, abounding with ravenous beasts; and over trackless wilds, and bridgeless floods, amid people *represented* naked and savage, and also continually in a state of warfare with each other, —and for what?—*Education*.

But assume *Abury*, and this region of Druidic marvels, as the principal site of their abode, and the *undoubted* Gallic intercourse is at once commodious: the Thames presenting an inlet for their light vessels, to within a few hours' land journey, safe, and direct as the paved ways of the Romans, and more agreeable to the traveller. To the neighbourhood of this region, *Southampton water* presents a still more commodious point of access, from the more western parts of

Gallia. For large vessels may here approach almost as near to *Stonehenge*, as the smallest to *Abury* by the Thames. And was not the capital also of king Cassibelinus (the British Agamemnon) situated by the Thames, about eighty miles from the sea? And does not this bring us in the direction of Abury; and place the 'strongly-fortified town,' or rather depot and fastness, conveniently and defensively, but a little in advance to the east or north-east? We now proceed to

SILSBURY HILL.

To rear this vast *cone*, on which the hand of time has apparently made no impression, the once surrounding earth has been removed to the general depth of a yard. In some places, however, in consequence of the contiguous artificial level on which it is placed, and the inequalities of the natural surface, a considerably greater depth of soil has been taken away, particularly by the road side, and applied to augment the elevation; the natural base of

which may be traced in all its inequalities ; and is distinguishable from its lofty sugar-loaf-shaped superstructure, by the superior greenness and compactness of its appearance. In fact, the range of hills from which the base of *Silsbury* has been cut, most likely afforded an easy access to the pile, till near its completion : when the soil of the severing cut must have topped the cone, and been either drawn up in baskets and buckets, or carried by means of ladders. *Silsbury*, like *Salisbury*, (so synonymous in sound,) *Amesbury*, *Abury*, and a hundred more cities, villages, and artificial hillocks in this region of tombs, seems to have derived its name, in conjunction with its localities, from the sepulturing of the dead. *Sil* is a name frequently given in the north of England, to the shallow part of a rivulet, or little stream ; probably from its shining silvery appearance. At *Sils-bury* two such sils, or little springs, meet together almost at its very base.

But though *Sils-bury*, so widely differing in appearance, and in *distinguished situation*

from every *carn, bury, burrow, or barrow*, with which this *Land of Graves* is so profusely scattered, may designate the earthly resting place of the '*mighty dead*;' and probably of the forgotten founder of Abury or Stonehenge himself, yet its origin can scarcely be considered merely sepulchral. In this arid region, the possession of the springs by which it is placed, must have been indispensable to the inmates of Abury. It may, therefore, plausibly be conjectured that their defence, both by superstition and arms may have been designed; for on the top of this cone, where I understand there is sufficient space for the manœuvring of a *waggon and eight*, a score of men might have defended themselves in days of yore, against a host. And that the place possessed, or still even possesses, a crypta, or *souterraine*, seems recently to have been demonstrated by the contiguous ground giving way under a passing waggon.—Next, in a *religious* point of view:—It may be considered as an appendage to, or part of *Abury*;

and certainly still contributes much to the general effect.—Lastly, it is not improbable that this monument may have been a *national* one; and the plausibilities seem still greater of its having, at one period, been a place of national assembly. An annual Festival-fair, held here, has only been discontinued of late years.

In my enquiries after *Antiquities*, I have declined, unseen, several coins, &c. offered to me. For I must confess, I was at a loss whether to consider some attendant circumstances indicative of *antiquarian hoaxes*, or a desire to enhance their value; or, not improbably, to detain a customer at the inn, who, from his *apparent* pursuits, might be conjectured to have more money and time, than wit to dispose of either. A local traveller, who gave me a flattering critique of Mr. Brown's *Abury and Stonehenge*, was brought up close to the former place; and amused me along the road with a most

laughable antiquarian joke or two, much too good and much too instructive to be thrown away. But I must reserve the precious *morceaux* till this primeval region, or *antiquarian kingdom*, as it may be termed, is traversed, and a blank page offers itself, previous to the folding of an epistle.

Barrows and *carns*, some of them of unusual dimensions, and nearly obliterated *breast-works*, and *campes-volant*, well nigh cover the surface of the hollow between *Silsbury-hill* and *Wans-dyke*. A raised earthen road also obliquely traverses it; called Roman, because used by these conquerors, but apparently of an earlier origin: and, I presume, once the link connecting Abury (and its *guide posts* already rendered so *terrible* by Mr. Brown) to the east, with *Caer-Dour*, and the highest navigation, and lowest ford on the Thames; and in a contrary direction, with Bath, Bristol, the Severn, and the Irish Sea. This raised road is a continuance

of the natural, or *rampire-termed* road, which led me yesterday past so many fortresses and marvels.

Wans-dyke, five miles to the south of Silsbury, merits of itself the visit of the Metropolitan Antiquary ; not merely as a stupendous monument of the wars and policy of ancient Britain and Gaul, but a monument whose era and object is not to be disputed : the northern position of the ditch incontrovertibly evincing, that it is in reality that defense of four score miles, reared almost a century previous to the Christian era, by Divitiacus, and his Belgic Soissons, as a protection against the aboriginal inhabitants.

Close to *Wans-dyke*, on its northern or Celtic side, where the retiring hills form a small crescent at about a mile distant from the present turnpike, and by the side of the old, is a *fortress*, apparently of the era of Cromwell. But I was not nearer to it than the present high-road.

As a cover will not make this and my previous epistle exceed two oz. I proceed to scribble a few subsequent conjectures relative to the wonders of yesterday. I believe I may have already noticed the favourite denomination of *Bury*, which prevails in this region of tombs. *A-bury*, however, I conceive to be a peculiar, or simple term, to distinguish this ancient, far-famed place from Salisbury, Tedbury, and all other *burial-places* of less note; as *Al Koran*, or *The Book*, distinguishes the *writings* of Mahomet, amongst his disciples, from all other books. For this important distinction, I consider *Abury* indebted to the unique and contiguous *tomb* or *apendage*; now distinguished (from the sanctuary of Abury) by the denomination of *Silsbury-Hill*.—*Abury*, however, like many other places, is sometimes differently denominated. And are there not good grounds for assuming, from the name of *Ave-bury*, sometimes used, that after the expulsion of the Druids, and the adoption of Christianity

by the Romo-Britons, this place might become a Christian sanctuary, or monastic retreat? Or this half-Latin name may have originated with heathen Rome; and might signify that here, (or more correctly, on the contiguous hill,) at the national assemblies, the tributary British Kings (or other great personage) received the *aves* or *hailings* of the people.—In a word, *bury* doubtless alludes to the final home of the *dead*: *Ave* probably to religious rites observed here; or to national honours, periodically rendered to the *living* at the proud tomb of exalted excellence.

P.S. The sacrilege committed at *Abury*, within the memory of man, is scarcely credible. And it is but within this few months, that two large stones—one at the eastern entrance, the other a little interior, and singly of the estimated weight of one hundred tons—have been *destroyed* on the widening of the road; though food and raiment to the

hungry and the naked, and the relief of the parochial rates, by executing the undertaking during a vacant season, must have been the result. The contiguous walls made from the fragments, are curious ; and ample enough to make a chapel or a whole hamlet. Soon expect to hear of *Eddington*, distant only seven miles : so I purpose reoccupying my present quarters ere night, and, if possible, by my dinner-hour.

LETTER IX.

Devizes, September 7th. (Evening.)

I have made for you the best plans and drawings of the FIELD of BATTLE, with its *accompaniments*, that I am able: for the scenery of Dove-dale is not more fantastic, than that of this immediate neighbourhood; and much easier to describe with the pen.

Most of the inhabitants of this vicinity, like those of Wallingford, had a shake of the head, or '*Oliver Cromwell*,' as a ready response from the beginning to the end of my *anti-quarian Catechism*. And I soon found the collecting of oral tradition, too much to resemble rummaging in a barrow for an antique: if you meet with any time-corroded relic,

you scarcely know what to make of it; examine and ruminate on it as you may. One truly intelligent fellow, as he seemed to deem himself, for he had served some of our great peninsular commanders, and even a *foreign Prince Royal*, in the capacity of *groom*, seemed bent to demonstrate that the *cannon-balls* recently found in the park of his present master, must have been fired from Eddington, by the army of Prince Gurthrum. He dwelt much on the *natural antipathy* which *they* must have had to *the place*, the properties of 'villainous saltpetre,' and cross shot, and case shot, and *battering in breach*, and *par camarade*, in such a jargon as Babel never heard: whilst I, like Hotspur when regaled by Glendower's 'skimble-scamble stuff, cried, Hum—well—go to—and heeded ne'er a word.' Nor was it till declining a glass of mixture ordered him at the bar of the inn at ———, with the view of getting civilly rid of his folly, that he informed me of a recent fever, in which he had lost his *hair*. Thankful was

I that I had retained my wonted ascetic equanimity : for of the contiguous loss (*of his wife*) the poor harmless fellow seemed fortunately most insensible.

Though I have certainly this day encountered some ignorance and folly ; incivility I have no reason to complain of. To more than one gentleman or lady, I have to tender my thanks for ancient coins, or the offer of other antiquities. And a shooting party which I accidentally met with near the spot, were as unusually intelligent as they were polite. From the strange medley also that had found its way into the *cranium* of a communicative and obliging farmer, I may have extracted something not altogether *drossy*.

DANE-LAY, the site of Garthram's '*summer camp*,' as it is termed by the historian, has evidently been chosen for the sake of water. Two streams issue from the abruptly terminating downs beneath which it is placed, and almost immediately unite ; so as to form,

along with the upland barrier, a sort of triangle of eight or ten acres. *Eddington* is under the same range; two or three furlongs to the east. *Bratton Village* is still nearer (*Dane Lay*) on the north west. But of the village once extending from the foot of *Bratton Castle*, to the western extremity of the camp at *Eddington*, nothing now remains but its isolated church; which has changed its original name on becoming the parish church of *Bratton*, a little to the north. Both these places seem, however, to have once been portions of *Eddington*. The name given to the camp indicates that no more contiguous town could then have existed separately; and a portion of the present village of *Eddington* having the distinction of a peculiar name, which I forget, gives plausibility to the conjecture.

Picket-Hill, where tradition says the attack of the English commenced, is a lofty and abrupt point of the upland, which protrudes itself between *Dane Lay*, and the present *Eddington*; overlooking the former on the

west, or south-west; and the latter on the north-east. On this *Hill* a Picket-guard is said to have been placed, and the *Battle* to have begun. Perhaps a more awful site for a conflict cannot well be conceived; at least for the surprised and the vanquished: and long ere the Danish army could have gained the old Roman Station of *Bratton Castle*, at about ten furlongs distance, many a brave fellow must have made 'but one step from the top of the hill to the bottom.'

This *Roman Station*, 'a place of greater strength, to which (history tells us) the Danes retreated,' must, in fact, all the time have been occupied by a portion of the Danish army. For what else could have prevented the most untalented and inexperienced general from securing this place, at the commencement of the attack?—unless indeed the peculiar situation of the English monarch made him apprehensive of driving his enemy to despair; and to prefer, for the present, the

eclat of a less decisive, but less precarious victory. The convenience of water, and pleasure, seem to have made Eddington the camp, or rather the court, of Gurthrum. And *Dane-Lay* was probably occupied by the common soldiery, or such portion of the army as could not be accommodated within the contiguous Saxon dwellings, or was not wanted to garrison the Fortress. This Fortress, on the west, with the Picket-guard stationed eastward, the Prince appears to have considered a sufficient defence for his otherwise unprotected residence.

From the *Coins* picked up in this neighbourhood, and now in my possession, it is not improbable that a party of the royalists, or republicans, really did occupy the *Station of Bratton Castle*. It was also garrisoned by the Britons on the evacuation of the Romans; and from this circumstance derives its present name: *Brattons* being the provincial term by which the Britons were here known to the Saxon invaders.

This Fortress, evidently of Roman origin, is not unworthy of having been the field of contention for a kingdom. Its area of about three score acres, is, to the north and west, almost naturally accessless. The other two sides are defended by an ample double rampire, with a parapet or breastwork, and fosses, which are still thirty feet below the top of the mounds. And the entrance, which is from the level on the south, has been further protected by an outwork, or bastion—*deformed* now indeed, sufficiently: but this needlessly irregular form may be owing to the assaults of those without, and the hasty temporary repairs of the garrison. At about a bow-shot from this entrance, and towards the centre of the station, seems to have been a sort of Citadel or tower: once, probably the residence of a Roman Legate; and subsequently converted into a British *Dun*, *Din*, or *Dinas*, a Danish *Rath*, and Saxon *Castle*. Here, on leading away a part of the stones a few years ago, some coins were discovered, which ap-

pear neither British, Romo-British, Anglo-Saxon; nor yet Anglo-Norman, Danish, or English. But some in-door day after the conclusion of active operations, *we* must have the assistance of your library and spectacles.

Though there can be no doubt of this Castle of Bratton having been a Roman Station, yet had the Danes been the first occupants, their *ban* or rampire must have partaken much of its present form, in consequence of the precipitous nature of the site: or they might probably have rounded the two artificial angles similar to the four at Lutcomb. For these barbarous marine rovers, certainly excelled the justly celebrated land warriors of scientific Rome, in mathematical skill in fortification. What school-boy has now to learn that a given number of acres are sooner fortified, and (devoid of artillery) more easily defended, in the circular form of the Danish camp, than in the square of that of the Romans.

Here also, a *White Horse* is delineated against the abrupt basis of the station to the

west or north-west: once, no doubt, the amusement of some idle Saxon garrison, quartered in the fortress above; and, it is more than probable, of a portion of that victorious army, which, under the conduct of the immortal Alfred, here trampled the Danish Raven in the dust.

Respecting the far famed HORSE near Wanstead:—for I may now presume to venture a decided opinion:—it seems evidently to have been the boast of a portion of the same army of West-Saxons, selected and retained as the peculiar guard of the King and his court;—a rival *toy*, intended to commemorate the same *glorious event*. A third White Horse, a dozen miles to the east of Eddington, has, doubtless, owed also its existence to one of those numerous garrisons established on the subjugation of the Danes.

To the south of Eddington, the downs are still scattered with monumental remains; both in the vicinity of the field of battle, and still thicker at *Bronker*, and on *Hatchbury plain*;

three and six miles distant. Northward, all is one vast sweep of hedge-row foliage, and culture, and luxuriance. One barrow, near *Dane Lay* has been removed; but, except a key, large enough for a church door, nothing but ashes was found in it. Another artificial mound, at the head of a narrow pass, called *Kowson's Hollow*, was also, some years ago, spread like dung upon the fields. This hillock was rotund, nearly twenty feet in height; and contained ashes, and the relics of broken arms, in the last stage of decay. But it is high time to bid adieu

‘ To this LAND of iron-harvests, graves,
And funeral names.’

And to make more direct for the FESTIVAL, and the gaiety of the northern English Capital, ere attaining which I begin already to apprehend the leaving of *Cock-Robin* behind; and a *forced march* and *triumphal entry* on a pair of wheels. Yet so long as I keep the saddle, it is my design still to proceed, as

much as may be, by the quiet *by-way*, in preference to the dusty *high-way*; and to select

‘ The vale, where scattered hamlets rise;’

Rather than the smoky city, and the plain,

‘ Where unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose;

With every want to luxury allied,

And every pang which folly pays to pride.’

LETTER X.



Birdlip, Sept. 8th.

On leaving *Chippenham*, a traveller can hardly fail to notice the partiality of the Martin for its northern precincts. Yet, how far the general '*kindliness of the air*' (which still continues) may induce this sweet inoffensive little bird to cluster there, as in the castle of Macbeth, its hanging tenement, seems rather for the *resident* to determine. Little else indeed, in that ancient town, attracted my attention; except the modern bridge over the Avon, on the centre of which three roads unite, as on one in the ancient town of Crowlands. I ought not, however, to neglect observing, that in this neighbourhood the tourist once more beholds the cow and the

ox ruminating, or quietly grazing in the wealthy meads, or sipping in the transparent stream : and in lieu of woodless sheep-downs, mouldering fortresses, and ancient tombs, once more rests his eye on contiguous luxuriance and fertility. The *cattle*, however, appear to be of a mongrel and inferior description. White backs and long horns prevail; but with less of Lancastrian than Hibernian concomitants. The white faces of Herefordshire are also not unfrequent; nor the Welsh figure, and sombre hue: and occasionally there is some appearance of the old Dutch bulk, bag, and lyre. The *sheep* seem equally various: but the South-down, or the Wilts variety of that useful breed, still prevails, even in these lowlands; for which it seems wretchedly adapted, and cannot fail to degenerate. Leicesters, Devons, (a sort of long woolled Dishlys, similar to the best improved Tees-water,) and mongrel Merinos are also not unfrequent; particularly in the neighbourhood of gentlemen's seats.

At *Malmsbury*, ten miles further to the northward, the ruined Abbey, the largest, at the Reformation, in the county of Wilts, has been recently slated; and converted, like several of the Scotch Cathedrals, into a parochial place of worship.

Cirencester, (eleven miles distant from *Malmsbury*,) under the more provincial name of *Cizeter*, or *Cisseter*, I unwittingly steered for, because informed that it was a horseman's nearest route to *Cheltenham*. Judge then of my agreeable surprise on entering, and soon recognizing—though never before in it—the largest and most ancient borough in all Gloucestershire; once the Dobunian Capital, and an important Roman Station. But, independently of what it *has been*, *Cisseter* richly merits the traveller's attention, notwithstanding the narrowness of its numerous streets, for what it *is*. Nor ought the view, about four miles to the west, so striking for its extent, to be passed in silence. Probably a sweep of fer-

tile country of sixty miles by forty, is at once under the eye, without ever quitting the high-road, or being sensible of any unusual altitude.

Yet of all the many fine prospects which this island affords, none, perhaps, ever pleased me more than the one from the village (of Birdlip) where I now write.

From *Snowdon* the view is 'sublime but sad.' *Dovedale* is merely a landscape,—a sweet, but fantastic *miniature* of rock and stream; and the celebrated vales of Cluid, Belvoir, and Honeyton, may be termed extensive *pictures* of luxuriance and fertility; but here every species of scenic loveliness seem assembled: whilst the Malverns, from their altitude and boldness of feature, cast over the picturesque and beautiful, an air of the sublime. Perhaps the view of York, with its immense champaign, and distant mountains, when gazed on from some points of Coxwold Park, and the eastern hills, may more resemble this from Birdlip; yet that from Benlomond,

of the fertile Menteith, and the 'Land of the mountains and the floods,' seems worthiest of being its rival.

But to descend into minutiae: for amply does the glory of the scene just quitted, merit a prouder—far prouder pen. The loveliness of the evening, the serenity of the setting sun, combined to render nothing of the beautiful wanting, or of the magnificent; where the bountiful hand of nature has scattered as much of the sublime as the enchantments of beauty will admit. To the west, the rocky abrupt declivity into the plain is finely wooded and diversified. Laughing in culture and luxuriance, to the right, the *Vale of Evesham* expands, and mellows in the distance; till fertility seems to melt away into the blending horizon, and beauty almost vanishes in the grandeur of immensity. *Chosen-Hill*, and the city of *Gloucester* beyond, with its Cathedral, and silvery smoke, impart an enchanting variety to the foreground of the picture. Perhaps it was this

silvery, sleeping *lake* of floating mists, that almost hid the sea-like Severn from my view ; yet atoned for the beauties which it veiled. In the distant back ground, the Malverns, and far off mountains of Cambria, give a varied, and additional air of sublimity to that thrown to the right, over the peerless scene, by the immensity of space.

P. S. Some Roman remains have been recently discovered here ; but time will not permit of their inspection.

LETTER XI.

Cheltenham, September 9th.

If the view from Birdlip was one unbounded and enchanting *picture*, those presented on travelling from that village to this celebrated watering place, may be termed *a continued gallery of selections from the pencils of the first artists*: or may, not inaptly, be compared to one of the fascinating poetic volumes of Sir Walter Scott. Every curve of the road as you proceed, is as a turning over of another leaf, in order to be charmed with some new, or varied, and inimitable scene. The traveller, often as he may pause, can pause only to admire. The more striking objects, like the characters of the skilful poet, step

boldly forward to enchant in every various point of view, or to delight by contrast or novelty, where grandeur and beauty cease to be conspicuous; and depart, whilst we admire, and yet love to dwell upon the fascination.

Near the third milestone, at about half way between Birdlip and Cheltenham, several of the more elegant houses of this fashionable watering-place look out from amid their groves, upon the traveller as he descends the winding road; and by their deep brown-red, and white hues, blue roofs, and courtly appearance, impart a strikingly novel, and enlivening feature to a variety that seems inexhaustive.

With respect to Cheltenham itself: Its modern hotels and mansions contrast in some instances strangely enough, with the venerable tenements still lingering by their side. And, notwithstanding the general handsome appearance of the streets, external comfort seems in some measure wanting, particularly

in the suburbs, in consequence of the dirt and confusion occasioned by the countless *embryo* buildings. In this respect it rather resembles certain parts of the metropolis than Brighton; not only in the style and elegance of its villas, and detached terraces, and rows or places; but in the absence of desertion and desolation; which so many of the unfinished and seemingly forsaken streets of Brighton present, or at least presented, some twelve months past. The company here appear also more select. Lacking, indeed, the pomp of royalty: but then the *nondescripts* that daily and hourly swarm upon the stages each season, from the Capital, are also invisible. It is now so long since I became an anchoret, that our other watering-places I almost forget. *Leamington* (a mere *nut-shell*) had not come into vogue. *Harrogate* was *a-la-mode*; and perhaps most resembled the one from which I date; I mean, with regard to its society, and the appearance also of some of its hotels. *Matlock*, I think, was merely a

resting place for *birds of passage*. *Buxton*, with its superb Crescent, and matchless 'Palace of the Steed,' had a considerable alloy of Sheffield *metals*, &c. and, at the commencement of the Grouse shooting, attracted a whole host of *sharp-shooters*, and shooters of every denomination. *Bath*, like the Roman *Bahia*, was fashionable only in winter. And the *Gems* (in those days) at the sea-port of Bristol were, many of them, brilliant indeed, and beautiful; but bore, in other respects also, too frequently a similitude to the specious produce of its mines.

The stone used at this place for building is beautiful, and remarkably fair; and appears precisely similar to that of Bath. Yet, notwithstanding the ease with which it is wrought, for I actually saw it (like wood) under the operation of the toothed *cross-cut*, the metropolitan rage for plastering is pretty general. But this, probably, is chiefly resorted to in renovating the older *aspects* of brick: a material of which one half of the

edifices here still consist. I cannot but think that, if some of the terraces or villas of the Regent's Park, had been constructed of choice bricks of the soberer hues, ornamented with columns and mouldings of this, or a similar species of stone, the variety would have had a pleasing effect; an air of the *real* also would have been bestowed, that, by some, might have been preferred as much as natural to more splendid, but fictitious female beauty.

LETTER XII.

Stratford, (on Avon,) September 10th.

From a most superb local map at the Library of Cheltenham, I obtained ample directions for my rural progress to this birth-place of our immortal bard, (previously visited in your company,) and which has little else, not even the scenery of its sedgy Avon, to recommend it to the notice of the tourist. By *Winchcomb* and *Mickleton*,—the line selected,—my progress this day will not much exceed thirty miles. The weather still continues uninterruptedly serene and beautiful; and to me, the ride has been a pleasing one. The villages have an air of rural comfort; many of them are pretty, and picturesque;

and the gifts of Pomona, in clusters of gold and blushing crimson, weighed down the boughs of the hedgerows, and seemed to woo the hand of the passing traveller; whilst the frequent peeps, and bursts of scenery, to the left, wanted nothing but an antecedent view to those on the southern approach to Cheltenham.

In this district, the land appears to be more in a state of aration than I had hitherto beheld since I quitted the neighbourhood of Wallingford. And the scarifying of the bean stubbles, with a pointed breast-hoe, nearly similar to a paring-spade, and the burning of the weeds previous to the labours of the plough, for wheat, had, to me, a novel air of agricultural neatness. Here the stubble is not collected by the foot in mowing, but raked afterwards. Perhaps a sort of sole, buckled on in a similar manner to the snowshoe of the Laplander, might be used with a cornuted front, to good effect. *Can you engage to procure me a medal, or a patent for the*

invention? Here the Durham breed of cattle become rather more frequent; but the ample horns of the white-backs, and the Hereford face and unvarying red carcass, still predominate. Amongst the sheep, grey aspects seem general: but without the other characteristics of the *South-down*, or any pretensions to the Leicestershire symmetry.

In architecture, freestone walls seem entirely to have superseded the use of timber. As on the other side of Cheltenham, the Dutch mode of building gable-wise to the road, or clustered, with various gable-end aspects, is prevalent; with the attic, and frequently the greater portion of another story, contained within the roof. In the cottage and inferior dwellings also, a sort of lighted loft is usually contrived by means of a gable window, or one peeping from the thatch.

At *Winchcomb*, a mansion, now the property and residence of the parish poor, attracts the traveller's notice, as a model of

elegance in the species of architecture alluded to; and might be equally recommended to the humble designer of the *useful*, and the tasteful ornamenters of our metropolis. *Studely* castle, also, about half a mile to the south, seems not unworthy the pencil of the artist, or the curiosity of the antiquary.

At *Mickleton*, a fine antiquarian *hoax* was attempted to be put upon the *Hermit*; which reminds me of the similar attempts, and of the *anecdotes* told me, in the neighbourhood of Abury; where such tricks are frequent, and managed better.

Some sporting gentlemen, it seems, whilst at Beckhampton Inn, resolved to have Silsbury Hill explored. But the result was disappointment. The huntsman, however, to one of them, determined that so meritorious a sacrilege should not go unrewarded: and giving his master the hint, produced a tremendous *whittle* and fork; used, the preceding winter, in cutting up horse flesh for his voracious pack. These he roundly asserted

were taken that day out of the Hill : and to these, he shortly afterwards had the audacity to add a huge pair of rusted *shoe-buckles*. The exhibiting these incongruous articles, have *gravelled*, I understand; many a subsequent antiquary and tourist; and procured to the owner of the *rare-show* and his colleagues, many a foaming tankard, and many a convivial roar; whilst the arch rogue re-acted his part, and mimicked the antique slang of the hoaxed and bewildered antiquary. Nay, my worthy host of the *Wool Pack* (I mean of course the host in days of yore) carried the joke yet further, and turned it to a still better account. Whoever called, he had always *antiquities* to dispose of; or rather, knew of those who had. And thus, by detaining his guests, not only sold his rarities, but trebled his bill. The smith's anvil and heavy hammer were superlative at the manufacturing of *antiques*: for the more clumsy the workmanship, the more ancient, and the more prizeable the article. The making of an

old woman's fire-shovel once proved a mine of wealth. The round pieces struck out (I speak of a riddle shovel for ashes) were knocked against an old half-penny, or key ; and quickly exchanged for the antiquary's current, to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. From this it appears that the Jew recently discovered *minting antiquities* at Rome, has even had a predecessor in the trade.

LETTER XIII.



Coventry, September 11th.

————— Having now adverted to all of moment, the reiterated request in your P.S. excepted, I proceed at leisure (this day of rest) to say as much of **STONEHENGE** as can be expected, after a lapse of so many years since it was seen : first, however, apprizing you that those authors who may have contributed to form my ideas on the subject, are, some of them, not remembered even by name ; and *none* at the *present* command of an unattended equestrian tourist, scribbling at an Inn. You cannot, therefore, expect me unarmed to come boldly as if *cap-a-pie* into the field. And yet I do so by roundly assert-

ing my belief in the Druidic origin of this conjectured *Antediluvian Temple*.

It has already been said, that the gazer on this ancient *Sanctuary* may, at times, almost imagine, as a chilly awe steals over him amid the solitude of the scene, that some hand, mightier than that of the present human race, has been there. An assertion which, at the first, may seem to assort but indifferently with the production of such a race as the ancient Britons are usually represented by modern historians, and also by those of Rome; who, besides being hostile, deemed it necessary to justify the invasions and barbarities of their war-loving countrymen, by their own mode of reciting events which they well knew there was no one to contradict. But, by the BRITONS, (however much the heat of their dog-days, or the exertions of the chase or war, might occasionally denude the ruder mountainous tribes,) are not here meant the naked savages presented to the imagination of every school-boy by the wood cuts orna-

menting the first page of Goldsmith's English History: but various branches or scyons of the far famed Celts or Gauls, the ruder but warlike Belgæ, and the foreigners mentioned by Cæsar; each comprising numerous states, united, in some instances, to others of Gallia under one sovereign, frequently aiding in the continental wars; and, what appears singular enough, a people to whom these civilized Continentalists were indebted (in Cæsar's time) for their learning and theology. By the BRITONS is further meant the insular portion of those far famed and far dreaded Celtic Gauls, who had established themselves in *Celt-iberia* and *Celt-icia*, in the time of Scipio Africanus; and also in the Cisalpine Gauls:—had founded the kingdom of *Galicia*, or *Gaul-Asia*, between the (Asiatic) cities of *Zam* and *Germa*, (the citizens of the latter probably accompanying *Germans*,) in the time of Paul the apostle;—and who fought by the side of the captured elephants of Darius, and the officers and soldiers of Alex-

ander the Great, under the command of the celebrated Pyrrhus.

Of the close union that subsisted between the Island and continental *Celts*, 'called *Gauls* by the Romans,' we have existing historical testimony, particularly by Cæsar; and this amply corroborated by the similarity of antiquarian remains scattered over France and the sister kingdoms: also by the ancient Irish *Commercial Road*, called AISGIER RIADA, extending through forests and swamps from Galway (*Gaul-a-way*) to Dublin, or *Dubh-lin*, (the capital of the Diablintæ, where, the Irish History informs us, duties were of old levied,) and from the SARN GAILAOH, or *British Causway* (of Whittaker) having been constructed almost in a line with the *Aisgeir Riada*, from the coast of the Cambrian *Veneti*, to the Straits of *Dover*, or *Rich-burrough*: further, in the *language*, which still lingers, in various dialects, amid our mountainous and more isolated regions, despite the efforts of conquest and of time; and in the national

name itself of Gaul, or Gael, being still retained by the present Caledonian (*Gael-a-donian*) Highlanders.

The Druids, however, notwithstanding the assertion of the Gauls to Cæsar, can hardly be considered of Insular origin; but *missionaries*; most probably Carthaginians: though doubtless both Greeks and Carthaginians must have been indebted for much to Thebes, Babylon, and the Chaldeans; to whose antiquity, that of Carthage, and even Greece, is acknowledged to have been but a sort of childhood.

‘ There in long robes the royal Magi stand,
 Grave Zoroaster waves the circling wand;
 The sage Chaldeans robed in white appeared,
 And Brachmans, deep in desert woods revered.
 These stopp’d the moon, and call’d th’ unbodied shades
 To midnight banquets in the glimmering glades;
 Made visionary fabrics round them rise,
 And airy spectres skim before their eyes:
 Of Talismans and Sigils knew the power,
 And careful watched the planetary hour.’

And Achilles we find thus addressing himself in prayer:

G

' O thou Supreme! high throned all height above!

O great Pelagic, Dodonean Jove!

Who midst surrounding frosts, and vapours chill,

Presid'st on bleak Dodona's vocal hill:

(Whose groves the Selli, race austere! surround,

Their feet unwashed, their slumbers on the ground;

Who hear from rustling oaks thy dark decrees,

And catch the fates, low-whispered in the breeze:)

Hear, as of old!——'

It was Zoroaster who, about five centuries antecedent to the Christian era, first covered in the *Persian* temples of the sun; that had hitherto, like our *Stone-henge*, been domed only by the vaulting arch of the Deity. But of the religion of the *Carthaginians* we know little: only we know that Carthage sprang from maritime Tyre and Phœnicia, the immediate neighbours of the Hebrews, and situate at no great distance from Babylon and Memphis:—facts which give an air of probability to the seemingly contradictory accounts quoted by old Fuller in his *Church History*. For from the Hebrews, the maritime nations with whom Solomon and the Israelites traded, might ac-

quire their knowledge of the One, only Creator; and from the other ancient monarchies, learn to blend fable with their mythology. The Druidic creed might not also always be the same, precisely; or some difference of opinion, or schism, might prevail, either generally or occasionally. In fact, Caesar expressly states that the 'Celts, Belgæ, and Aquitans of Gallia all differed from each other in manners, language, and in laws.'

The notes made on visiting Stonehenge are not now by me: but if Mr. Maurice, the author of the Indian Antiquities, be correct in asserting that the grand entrance to Stonehenge, and also to Abury, is astronomically ascertained to be precisely *north-east*, like the portals of the ancient caverns dedicated to Mithras, (the Sun,) this is not the case with a Druidic circle, or *minor Stonehenge*, which I once visited, in ascending the mountain of Skiddaw, precisely at the time of the autumnal equinox. The sun was just emerging from a cloudless horizon of hills, that appeared

exactly, on a level with the elevated site of the circle, and proved its entrance and oblong adytum (or *Sanctum Sanctorum*) to point due east.

What a modern French writer (the name at this moment does not occur to me) has asserted, relative to the greatest marvels of antiquity possessing insular situations, seems, in *Stonehenge* alone, amply verified. Such, in fact, is the imposing appearance of the *Choir Gaur*, or *Great Circle* or *Sanctuary*, that the vulgar of the present day aver that it can have been created by supernatural agency alone; and many of the more knowing seem to consider it rather the effect of chemical composition, than of mechanic powers. To the *fraternity of Druids* (aided by their mechanical skill, and including their disciples) I have no hesitation in saying we are alone indebted for a monument, that seems more worthy of the finger of the DEITY, than any thing which antiquity has left us, or modern times produced. Of this *marvel*—

this sublime specimen of the simply *grand*—the lesser *circles* scattered still so profusely over our pastoral and mountainous regions, seem to have been humble provincial and parochial copies, i. e. suffragan *Minsters* and *Village Churches*: and Stonehenge appears, not only to have been designed for a religious Temple, but to make converts, and to retain over coronets and diadems, a reverential awe for the new priesthood, and its indicated supernatural assistance.

Considered in this light, STONE-HENGE evinces the acmé of judgment and taste. Sculpture, bestowed on such immane masses, would have been paltry—would have metamorphosed the *sublime* into the *neat*—and appeared unworthy the otherwise seemingly indicated hand of the *Divinity*. Yet that its architects could handle the chisel with address, any one may satisfy himself of, by minutely examining some of the oblique blocks now partially displaced from their once elevated horizontal position:—a semi-

globular excavation will be discovered; and on the top of the corresponding *supporter*, a protuberance, rounded and smoothed, exactly to fit the cavity; and link, unseen, the whole into a stability that has thus outlived, for countless centuries, all the hostilities of man and of the elements.

From Carthage I have derived the Druids. Nor is it improbable that from Carthage, or rather, its neighbourhood, these Islands received their primitive inhabitants. Coast-wise, and by the Balearides to Narbonne, the inexperienced navigator need never quit sight of land: and by the Peninsula overland, little more than thirty miles of *plain sailing* would bring the Mauritanian to Kent.

It is, however, still more probable, that on the annihilation of the city of Carthage, her merchants and seamen, her nobles, patriots, sages, and priesthood, sought the shores the least connected with Rome, to which Carthage and her provinces had been accustomed

to trade; and that the Gallic *Aquitani*, and Gallic *Veneti*, then became powerful at sea; long ere

‘ From dirt and sea weed haughty Venice rose ;’

and that these islands received also their share of Punic refugees. And must it not have been the descendants of the little connected Punic exiles, who soon after obtained the dominion of the ocean; and became pirates, so formidable to Rome and her provinces, that it seems evident, had their four hundred towns, and immense navy, been united, as old Carthage, into one magnificent empire, not all the power of the Romans, with the great Pompey at its head—and invested with Dictatorial powers, such as no previous danger had rendered necessary—could have been equal to the contest.

Now, that many of these captains and commanders of vessels and squadrons (particularly those of direct Punic origin) might, when chased from the Tuscan seas, find here

a final asylum from Latian hatred, (amid the exiled priesthood and philosophers of ruined Carthage, and the previous colonists from her subjugated dependencies,) seems but a natural consequence of the event. And that many Punic refugees—mediately or immediately—did colonize these islands, is rendered further probable by various circumstances and coincidences,

No one can doubt that either the country of the *Ger-mans*, or the people, has originally been called simply *Ger*. Nor is the conjecture unpalisble that *Car-thage* was originally, by the Carthaginians, called *Caer* only; which in the Celtic implies the *defence*, *refuge*, or *sanctuary*; and is compounded in an infinity of our oldest fenced cities, fortresses, fastnesses, and religious edifices. Thus Taliesin, the Arch-Bard, or Druid, who flourished nearly eight centuries after the destruction of Carthage, talks for ever in his *Preidddeu Annwn*, or *Spoils of the Deep*, of *Caer-Sidi*, or the Circle or Sanctuary of Sidi;

and I know not how many other Caers beside. And we have Caer-Leon, probably built by provincial Carthaginian refugees from Leon; besides an infinity of still-existing similar compounds in that portion of Britain, which escaped the exterminating sword and fire of the Saxons; and for a few specimens of which, I now beg to refer you to my letter from Wantage. In the Celtic-Irish, Armorican, and English *Car* or *Carr*, and its derivatives *car-riage* and *car-tage*, (a mode of moving goods that could not easily be adopted till our oldest roads, the *Aisgair Riada* and *Sarn Gailach*, were constructed,) and in chartage (or *cartage*) also, there is a considerable similarity to the name of that city that *charted* so many coasts, and whose fleets *carried* the merchandize of the world. And in the *cars* or chariots used by the Carthaginians in Sicily, against Timoleon and the Corinthians, we find a mode of warfare mentioned, which no other people then, or subsequently, have made use of, except the natives of this Island,

for repelling the invasion of Caesar. The strategy and manœuvring of these *cars* is precisely similar, both in Plutarch and the Commentaries. In the *Punic* antipathy of the Druids to the Roman power, and in the dreadful retaliation of the latter—for the Druidic was the only Theology with which the Romans interfered, much less exterminated—is not something of ancient national feuds and African animosities also visible?

Of the rise and fall of the ancient *Mistress of the Seas*, through the medium of her own historians, we know nothing. Like her dominion and her creed, the very language of Carthage, once spoken on so many coasts, is now no more. Its only vestiges, according to our best linguists, are some passages in Plautus—a part of which Bochart conjectures to be Lybian, one of the *Punic dialects*—and the names of a few numbers: and it must be confessed that several of the lines alluded to, bear a wonderful affinity to the Irish Celtic.

In fact, a great deal that of late years has been written about the Triads, and Bards, and the Cairn-brê coins, and Hu the mighty, and Taliesin's incomprehensible *Preiddeu Annwn*, and the mysteries of *I know not what*, by Mr. Bryant, and the *Lord knows who*, seems much of it far rather to apply to some maritime city, navy or vessel, hero, and queen—to some *Carthage, Hannibal, and Dido*, than to *Noah and the Ark*, and the *Helo-Arkite God*, and the *Arkite Goddess*. Thus, if *Tasc-van-it* signifies *Pledge of the Lady of corn*, or any other pledge; or if *Tasc'la-no-van-it* imports *The sacred Pledge of the SHIP of the Lady of corn*, instead of its having any reference to the *Goddess Ceres*, and *Noah's Ark*, I should consider it the coin (similar in its origin to our *Bank Bills*) with which some mercantile people, probably the *Tyrians, Carthaginians*, or *Demi-Punic Aquitans*, and *Veneti*, had paid—as well as in corn—for the goods they periodically exported. And what could have been more

worthy of early mercantile skill or Punic subtilty—either as a pledge of returning to pay off any deficiency of grain for goods received; or as a device to keep the simple natives dependent on them, and anxious for their return? The letters, it must be allowed, are Roman, both on Mr. Whitaker's and Mr. Camden's coin: but we find, from Cæsar's being obliged to write secret dispatches in the *Latin language* and *Greek characters*, that the Latin characters were then known to the Celtic nobility. Besides, the *Roman character* might no more originate with the *Romans*, than their famous *Spanish swords*, that gave to Rome the dominion of the world.

Does it not further appear plausible, that, when Taliesin says something to the following effect—*The JUST toiled; on the sea which had no land did they abide; it was their just dealings that saved them from extreme misery*—with much more of a similar nature, it may rather be applied to some *Carthaginian* or *other merchants and exiles*, after

the annihilation of their *homes* and the subjugation of their *country*, than to *Noah's Ark and family*? Taliesin did not write, till almost eight centuries after the final overthrow of the Punic power: still the *Druidic* and *Bardic secrets* must have been known to him; and amongst those secrets, doubtless would be some account of the Druidic origin; a fraternity that, in Ireland and Caledonia, was never exterminated by the Romans, nor even totally amid the Cambrian mountains.

Further, if the *white sea-mew* was typical of the Druids, may it not rather allude to their *transmarine origin* and *connexions*, than to any *Arkite Goddess*, or *Diluvian Mythology*? And it was probably the *destruction of Carthage*, and the sea dominion of the *Pirates*, which then sprang into existence, that rendered Britain so little known to the Romans, at the period of Cæsar's invasion; and would doubtless cut off, in a great measure, the British intercourse with Greece and the more civilized world.

That the learning of the ancients—such as the astronomy of the Chaldeans, and the eloquence of the Greeks—did not pass into this Island by the way of Gaul, but through the medium of some marine power, is evident from the Gauls sending here their nobility and priesthood to educate. Cæsar understood from the Gauls that the Druidic lore (including the doctrine of Pythagoras) had its origin in Britain. Doubtless any other origin was among the arcana of the Druids: and the precise form which, in Cæsar's time, their doctrine had assumed, might actually have originated in Britain. In fact, in this subserviency of Gaul to British learning and theology, we have a powerful argument against the colonizing of this Island from the continent: *unless a second colonization, or military or a missionary conquest, 'previous to the arrival of the Belgæ, is admitted.*

The Druidic or British priesthood, with its learning, seems then to have been derived immediately, by Carthage, or by Carthage

and Phœnicia, from the orientals. But the primitive inhabitants, particularly if we consider the similarity of the names of Insular and Continental States, in the maps of Ptolemy and D'Anville, have doubtless originated from the Celtic Gauls; and been augmented at various periods previous to Cæsar's invasion, by different Septs of the Belgæ, or Germanic or Cymrian Gauls; and also by Punic exiles.

You know I am one of those who believe in the Mosaic account of the Deluge: for I have seen specimens of its effect.

LETTER XIV.

Twy-cross, September 12th.

Doubtless you marvel where the *Hermit* can have got to. My quarters are however to my ascetic taste, and in the immediate neighbourhood of Earl Howe. You will say I could not be in a better. The amusements of this youthful nobleman are represented entirely of the rural and domestic kind;—the society of his family—Agriculture—Stock-breeding—and the improvement of his patrimonial domain. A character, at this period of tranquillity, more to be prized than all the *naval trophies* of his lordship's justly celebrated ancestor. But it is time to inform you how I found my way to Twy-cross ;

where I now pause till the heat of the day (for the weather is beautiful as ever) has somewhat abated.

The Baronial *Castle* of WARWICK and the ruins of KENNLEWORTH, you know we visited together: even before the latter had acquired its present celebrity. On breakfasting yesterday at the former place, I therefore took the old and almost deserted road for Coventry, past *Leechdale Abbey*, (the seat of Mr. Lee,) a heavy, square building, somewhat ancient, but no more like an Abbey—at least *Fountains*, *Melross*, and *Westminster*—than is the Ducal residence at *Woburn*. Previous to quitting the high-road, I observed a Cross of stone on my left, whose modern appearance, and somewhat novel situation, excited my curiosity. ‘Pray, Sir,’ said I to a respectable looking man passing, and who had something of the *cut* of a servant out of livery, ‘can you inform me of the cause of that erection just beyond you.’—‘That *Cross*,

Sir, is in memory of a Roman camp that was there.'—'A *cross* in memory of a Roman camp! Pray who was the commander?'—'Why —— Ralph Abercrombie.' The interrogated here observing a cynical, or rather sceptical peculiarity of smile, resumed, with no little warmth and eagerness: 'That house there, Sir, belongs to a *Roman Catholic* family, Sir; and this, Sir, is their property, Sir—It all belongs to Roman Catholics.'—You see, my dear T——, how *antiquarian lore* is to be collected. I had often been annoyed by ignorance, but this—for it was obtained without going a step out of the road, or a moment's delay—this risible blunder was sweet to me as the honey of the Australian bee: an insect, though irritated, yet without a sting.

Coventry, so celebrated for its extensive domains, and its immunities, and which place attained, by a sort of sabbath-day's journey, yesterday to dinner, may be recognized at a distance, by its tripple spires. From thence

to NUNEATON was by the dusty highway : and the only object that attracted attention—the *mode of conveying coals*. Little Robin seemed both amazed and alarmed at the *moving coal heaps* ; beneath which asses, without the aid of either carriage, bag, or pannier, convey them from the mines. The masses are so large and compact, that they easily build up on each side, and over the pack-saddle ; to which two pair of crooked sticks, or sometimes a kind of frame, is attached for their support ; and the drudging animal trips away under a moving coal-hillock.

At Nuneaton I this morning again plunged into congenial retirement ; and, by the village lanes of Fenny-Drayton and Sibson, have made my way here.

WARWICKSHIRE may be termed *wealthy* and *agricultural*, rather than picturesque. It is better calculated for the tour of the English yeoman, than for that of the painter, poet, or antiquary. Every view may be said

to terminate in *Roast Beef* and *Suet Dumplings*: and the shire of LEICESTER, which I have just entered, and often previously traversed, is but a *remove* of the *Sirloin* for a *Saddle of Mutton*.

P. S. If I mentally censured the Wilts farmer for harnessing two or three horses in a line to plough, what may be said of the general Warwickshire practice of similarly harnessing *five*?—a number, excepting once in Devonshire, that I never beheld so employed. The adhesive nature of the soil may indeed, in some seasons, here render the mode occasionally indispensable; as well as the number of horses. But this has been the very reverse of such a season: and was the agriculturist aware how little power the fifth, and even the fourth horse from the plough, can possibly have, he would be careful to select a dry season, (like the present,) and to yoke in pairs, and even tripples, when three horses were requisite: and did our Legislature reflect on

the number of brave men and distressed families that might be maintained on the acres necessary for the pasturage and winter provender of a horse; and that little more than half the number of horses, in some agricultural districts, and in the London drays, by a proper disposition of the team, would do the same work; and, further, the increase of rent that a reduction in the number of work horses would enable the agriculturist to pay; they could hardly fail to increase the quantity of human food, and the *mouths* which plenty ever speedily creates, by taxing all horses that were harnessed in single line for more than a specific number of days annually: granting, however, on easy terms, licenses (when applied for) to enable the agriculturist to suit the soil and season.

LETTER XV.

Derby, September 12th.

I this morning noticed upon an elevated situation by the road to ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH, oaks, ashes, willows of various kinds, and a variety of other indigenous trees and shrubs, all growing most luxuriantly together by the road side, along with healthy larches and firs occasionally planted between; and I name the singular *sociality*, as you are at present planting; and a want of attention to the nature of the *sub-soils* (which can alone here unriddle the mystery) often occasions considerable loss to the planter, as well as to the agriculturist.

Its *ruined Castle* and *Church* make a fair subject for the pencil as you descend the hill

to *Ashby*. 'Tis only screening a house or two with as many trees that have yielded to the axe. The *Bath* is a truly noble structure, that would not have disgraced ancient Rome herself, during the era of her British dominion; and will doubtless be a focus of attraction to the gay and the fair of the neighbourhood, as well as to the valetudinarian.

About three miles from *Ashby*, on the road to *Ticknall*, a view presents itself rarely to be met with, and almost impossible to be surpassed. Parks and woods beautifully diversify the fore ground; and to the right, the whole *Vale of Belvoir*, and the wooded rock on which the *Castle* beetles are spread out as upon a map, and meet the far off horizon. In front, and to the left, the distant blue hills of the mountainous part of Derbyshire terminate and diversify a view more varied than that upon the right, and almost equally extensive and luxuriant. The whole is certainly a magnificent scene; and gives you no idea of *Derbyshire* being the *back-bone* of

England. All is luxuriance and harmony: and the swells and curves are graceful and lovely as the bosom and neck of *beauty* itself. **DERBYSHIRE** also abounds in fascinating and interesting objects, that are peculiarly its own:—*Dovedale*, so sweetly romantic and so fantastic—its gloomy *Cave in the Peak*—its sparry caverns and mines—its romantic watering-place of *Matlock*, with its natural *Tepid Baths*—and even of *Buxton*, including its '*Palace of the Steed*,' are all unique. The same may be said of the ducal Palace of *Chatsworth*, with its scenic accompaniments; and of *Haddon Hall*—the finest specimen of a perfect and unmodernized baronial mansion of the earlier ages, that we perhaps possess.

Chatsworth has perhaps a rival in *Lowther Castle*; owing to the fine taste of the present Earl, (of *Lonsdale*,) which has converted the barren beacon-hill of *Penrith* into a magnificent forest. Wretched must have been the taste of his Lordship's predecessor, that amid the bounding mountains, touching heaven in

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another direction, could prefer a few paltry clumps; when the same quantity of fence, and a few additional trees, could have procured the *appearance* of so magnificent a sylvan object. It is to be hoped the present nobleman may yet unite these contemptible *buttons* into scenic importance and grandeur.

Nor is the ancient and respectable capital of this distinguished county without its peculiar celebrity, in the exemption of its Burghers from all tolls, not only in London, but most parts of the kingdom. Here, also, a portion of the *Fife-burghers*, or Danes of the Five Burrows, were established by Alfred the Great. And here, on an island in the Derwent, the famous silk manufactory was commenced nearly a century ago, by Sir Thomas Lombe; who brought the invention from Italy at the hazard of his life; and was rewarded by the British Legislature for the service, with a grant of £14,000.

LETTER XVI.

Ferrybridge, September 13th.

When I tell you that *Little Robin* is amongst the stud of my present host, you may marvel how we both have been conveyed here since the date of my last at *Derby* : and I must confess to you that I feel somewhat proud of my *generalship* in a *forced march* at so bustling a season.

At *ROTHERHAM*, then, (celebrated for its schools, and magnificent cathedral-like church,) I ordered horses to a post-chaise, whilst *Robin* regaled himself on an ample feed. He was just attached behind the vehicle, his equipments stowing within, and the *Hermit* about to be so, when the *distress* of a

gentleman and lady for a *relay*, caused me to consent to a general transfer of post-nags, pony accoutrements, and *Hermit*, to the carriage under *embargo*: and *Pomfret* was thus attained (like *Dandy Dinmont* in his *trindling-kist*) nearly by the usual dinner hour, and in the most luxurious state of indolent repose. In the calm hour of twilight, instead of a few turns as usual round my room, I proceeded leisurely here, (to coffee and a bed,) with all imaginable comfort and ease.

PONTEFRAC^T (so celebrated for its liquorice) appears to be the precise counterpart of what is usually desired in a *wife*: without affectation—without finery;—it is the picture of neatness, real comfort, and respectability. The *Castle*, said to be the scene of Richard the Second's tragical fate, is nearly obliterated. One of the churches, also, is without roof or glass. Another of a more elegant and modern architecture is a pleasing structure, and perfectly in unison with the appearance of the town.

But I have not yet informed you that my route from Derby has been by way of **CHESTERFIELD**, where (and it is singular enough) the contiguous arable district appears to be the latest in the whole kingdom. Between the Thames and the Aire (except a week ago on *White Horse Hill*) I had seen no grain uncarried; and understand that this is also the case northward to the Tweed, in all but moorish districts. Now, at *Chesterfield*, half the harvest was this morning in the fields; and a considerable portion yet unfit for the sickle.

From Chesterfield, the remainder of my this day's *equestrian* progress has been by hilly village lanes, in many places perfectly accessless to a carriage, and frequently requiring the slowest pace of a horse, and even the dismounting of his rider. Yet, in a tour, such roads may be considered advantageous. Dust is avoided; the green lane occasionally enables the horse to move at the swiftest pace without heating his hoofs; the variable ground alters the position of the horseman,

and the pressure of the saddle: whilst the steeper declivities induce him to dismount, and descend without effort. But these are the less important advantages. On the high-roads, all is *amalgamated*, and assimilated, and the same. In the country lanes and villages only, are the manners and customs, and ballads, and legends, and traditions of the people to be learnt: there only those magnificent views, unsolicited, present themselves, that the level of the coach roads entirely precludes: there only the earth and its inhabitants ever offer something new.

Nor was the progress of this morning without its share of interest. To the right—all occasionally beauty and variety; to the left—swell on far-off swell into the mingling clouds. By the by, one *scene* by no means ought to be omitted. It was that of a lovely village girl,

‘ Veiled in a simple robe; a native grace
Sat fair proportioned on her youthful form,
Fresher and brighter than the morning rose,
When the dew wets its leaves.’

The little maiden, apparently not yet entered into her teens, was seated in a shady part of the green lane, and busily employed with her needle; whilst her cow grazed quietly near. Old England's by-gone days of rural innocence, and domestic comfort, and good *old English housewifery*, came, like the sounds of long forgotten music, stealing over the soul. Need an *old fashioned old man* to add, that for once he felt pleasure, pure and unmingled as that of his childhood? Yet if the avocation and appearance of the little villager delighted, her demeanour was calculated to win the heart. On coming nearly opposite, she rose respectfully, and, without once lifting her eyes, dropt a courtesy; sat down, and resumed her occupation. 'Indeed you are industrious!' said I, 'both cowherd and sempstress at the same time:' adding, I believe, a wish that her industry might be rewarded by a *good husband*, and appending also a confident hope that she would make a *good wife*.

The downcast eyes that had hitherto
 'sought the ground,' and, like those of Lavinia,

————— 'Shot all

Their humid beams into the blooming flowers,'

now met and pursued mine, as I proceeded,
 with a modest boldness, a sweetly timid, yet
 reposing confidence, that pleased—and flat-
 tered—and surprised. It was an expression
 of countenance not easy to be defined: yet
 certainly, despite the child's youth, in some
 respects resembling that

————— 'Language by the Virgin made,

Not read, but felt; not uttered, but betrayed;

At once so chaste, so touching, so refined,

So soft, so wistful, so sincere, so kind,

Were eyes melodious, and could music play

From flowers struck newly by the morning ray,

Such tender music from such gaze might rise,

And angels own the language of the skies!

Hermit as I am, I could have returned, and
 clasped her like a daughter to my heart.

A morning's ride will now bring me to
 YORK in sufficient time for *operations*. Post

horses are not to be had so near the *magnet of attraction* : but I am independent of all but *Cock Robin*, who seems, poor little fellow, pert enough.

LETTER XVII.

Tadcaster, September 14th.

The throng here is immense ; and equals any thing, in the way of bustle, that I expected to meet with at York itself. Such ringing of bells, and running of waiters within ! Such whipping, spurring, driving, riding, and rattling and clattering without !! And then, the poor jaded worn-out horses ! Would that Mr. Martin had been here ! Why, if this be Yorkshire charity, it is *charity* with a vengeance.

To be serious :—that the worthy member for Galway has not met with more cordial assistance, is to be regretted by every feeling individual, and the nation at large. Surely

a BRITISH LEGISLATURE might have produced a code against cruelty, equally creditable to the head and the heart; that might have saved so noble an animal as the *horse*—an animal that so frequently seems to constitute a part of man himself, ‘imparting to him a sort of second nature,’—from being whipped out of existence—literally *murdered by inches*:—something, with the assistance of our prelacy, in the Divine stone of the Hebrew lawgiver, which Addison so much admired. I think the passage quoted in the *Spectator*, is to the following effect:

‘If thou find a bird’s nest by the way, and take the dam sitting upon the nest; thou shalt *in any wise* let the dam go, that it may be well with thee before the Lord.’

In France, a postilion will cheer his horses with his jockey slang and melodies; and by cracking a tune with his thong, not on the sides of the animal, but by adroit flourishes in the air: and should this be insufficient, instead of murdering with the spur and

whip-chord, sippets of bread and wine restore the noble creature from exhaustion. Something similar, or even superior to this, is the kind and generous conduct of the wild Arab of the desert. The barbarous and warlike Germans of old, and even the piratical Danes, could boast, I believe, of a like noble celebrity. And in Italy, or at least its capital, the horses are brought annually on a certain day, to one of the public fountains, to be baptized by the priesthood : and to teach humanity to those under whose care they are placed, is the assigned reason. Of the kindness and attention of the Laplander to his rein-deer, and the *love-lays* with which he beguiles the moonlight journeys of both himself and his only *companion*, we have many pleasing accounts. I think it was Nineveh, that was once spared by the Almighty, *because there was much cattle in the place.*

‘ And the plain ox,

That harmless, honest, guileless animal,

In what has he offended ? he, whose toil,
 Patient and ever ready, clothes the land
 With all the pomp of harvest ? The ghaut wolf,
 Who from the nightly fold fierce drags the bleeting
 prey,

Ne'er drunk her milk, nor wore her warming fleece :

Nor has the horse, at whose capacious chest
 The deadly tiger hangs, e'er ploughed for him.

But *man*, whom Nature formed of milder clay,
 With every kind emotion in his heart,

And taught alone to weep ; shall he, fair form !

Who wears sweet smiles, and looks erect to heaven,
 Surpass the rabid prowlers of the waste.

By famine stung, in heartless, dastard deeds ?

Shall *man*, by *Christian Pastors* taught and led,

Deem e'er to find a path to Immortality

And Heaven, by savage cruelty, and acts

Of ruth and rage the generous lion scorns ?

After all, to humanize the heart appears to
 be rather the *immediate* province of the
divine, than of the *magistrate* and the *posse*
comitatus. And it might be worth—*well*
worth Mr. Martin's pains, to ascertain by
 what means it is taught to the French, and so
 many other nations.

Perhaps an annual *prize-medal* from a Diocesan, for the best discourse on this subject ; and a triennial or even septennial gift of a living and a prebendal-stall to the curate and beneficed divine who should excell their contemporaries, might do more in seven years, than all the vengeance of arbitrary laws could ever accomplish. Now this, or something very similar to this, might be effected, even without legislative interference, by either of the Universities—any two or three of our mitres or coronets—any society of private individuals.

Nor can I lay down my pen without one line in the behalf of my suffering *fellow-creatures*, that writhe and linger within the walls of our hospitals—not of York, but of the Metropolis. Might not *societies of ladies* do much—particularly *religious societies*, sanctioned and patronized by the state ? Societies either of matrons to superintend and hire the *proper nurses* ; or of devotees, or holy sisterhoods ; who, by such alternate

penance, might wish gratuitously to devote their lives, or the season of sorrow and mourning, to the service of their fellow creatures and of heaven; to the present alleviation of their own griefs, and the eternal benefit of their souls? Such *institutions* or *societies* might secure to the sick and wretched, that kindness and attention which hardened and forsaken *street-walkers* need never be expected to bestow. And might not *Mr. Martin*, or some new *Howard*, also do much by visiting our hospitals, and becoming a revered candidate for the eternal gratitude of the poor and of his country, as the *president* of an *Hospital Committee* or *Society*?

Having now penned my crude and hasty ideas on these truly important subjects; I must resume the empty saddle now courting my attention, and suffer myself to be carried along by the mighty current of the present attracting vortex.

LETTER XVIII.

York, Sept. 14th. (Evening.)

Of the **FESTIVAL** itself, and of the *Performers*, what can a Hermit say, that has not been said already, and to better purpose? Even my gratification you have anticipated—nay, almost been made acquainted with. For this morning's issue from the press, declares 'the delight and gratification to have been universal.'

As a *connoisseur* in *modern music*, I must acknowledge myself infinitely inferior to the able editors of the news-papers of this city and province. But were I a *legislator*, most assuredly **MUSICAL FESTIVALS** should have a substantial testimony of approbation; particularly at a time like the present, when

the temple of discord is shut, and the 'voice of battle hath died away, and the song and pipe of the shepherd should be heard upon the hills.'

Yet still—much as I approve of *festivals*, and *sociality*, and *charity*, and *harmony*—some associations have been brought to the *mind's eye*, not exactly in unison with the place of celebration ; and it occurs to me, that some slight alterations *might* render the charity more prolific, and the general good effect more obvious ;—that within the walls of the SANCTUARY itself, a little more of the good old *national* and neglected festivals of *Christmas*, *Easter*, and *Whitsuntide*, might not be amiss. Nor do I hesitate boldly to assert that too much musical talent and celebrity are concentrated, (and most liberally concentrated,) within the walls of this ancient city. To the eye of taste, too many *brilliant flowers* may be planted to deck one *border*, too many *glittering gems* dazzle upon the same *vest*. How much

superior to crowded *brilliance* on the *parterre*, is the effect of a few *novel magnets*, (such as the *Delia* and the *Rose of Tengllo* recently were,) amid a well-selected arrangement of *violets* and *primroses*, and similar lovely, modest ‘*daughters* of the spring!’ But *music* more properly assimilates with *poetry*. Yet splendid similes and ornaments may be too profusely scattered through even poetry itself. In fact, the *York Festival* brings forcibly to my imagination the noble and elaborate translation of the Greek Poet, by Mr. Pope : nor can I avoid reverting to the refreshing *novelty*, which the gracefully-spirited, yet somewhat wilder and more irregular cantos of *The Lay* and *Marmion* not long ago afforded.

To wealth and fashion, the warblings even of a Catalani can have no attraction here ; for they possess no novelty. And this city alone, in Miss Wilkinson, a beautiful and accomplished young lady, has (I understand) furnished a vocalist whose talents might seem

to render the importation of so many *exotics* from the continent needless, and almost absurd. Nothing personal is, or has by any means been intended. But in this universal *philanthropy* there is, in this instance, a something that militates against my biblical and unfrenchified ideas of *patriotism*, as well as of propriety.

In another of our *superlatives* also, I almost incline to think that too great a liberality of use may be perceived. I allude to the Choruses.

The *sublime* in any thing does not admit of the countless varieties of the *beautiful*; nor will it bear either such frequent repetition, or to be so long dwelt upon; for the mind is powerfully excited, yet *finds no* repose. Now noise—the combined musical tones of countless tongues and instruments—can have no pretensions whatever to the *beautiful*; but its sublimity is undoubted. Yet even this sublimity, in my humble opinion, is placed in the back-ground by the

simpler grandeur of the *thunder-peal*—the roar of ordnance—or the shout of marshalled myriads. *Handel* was no bad judge of what the oral nerves would bear, in order to convey *pleasure*, as well as occasional astonishment, to the sensorium. For we may be *debauchees* even in *music*—we may prematurely exhaust one sense, as well as another.

To improve *many parts* of *Handel*, I can believe nothing impossible. But will this improve, or add to the effect of a complete performance, or oratorio? Novelty alone, in composition or arrangement, may sometimes indeed afford a temporary delight. But when the zest of novelty is exhausted, to return to the *old* may then be discovered to possess the double advantages of *novelty*, and superior merit also. But I had perhaps best reserve my *grand critique* and *suggestions* for the *finale*.

LETTER XIX.



York, Sept. 1844.

You still desire to hear from me every day :
I garnish therefore my present *blank*, by giving vent to my feelings of regret that musical talent and skill should so frequently be lavished on poetry of the most contemptible description. Nor will it ever be otherwise, whilst foreigners and illiterate musicians, raised to sudden, though deserved affluence and celebrity for the melody and compass of their voices, or the delicacy of their ear, are left so much to the vileness or capriciousness of their own judgment, on a subject of which they frequently know, and can know nothing. Talented individuals

indeed ! but frequently as defective, with regard to taste in literature, as the lofty poet and elegant and judicious critic are wanting in musical skill. In the Divine simplicity of the Holy Scriptures, there is often something sublime. But lines like the following before the eyes, mar the most talented performer's efforts, and cause no emotion but regret :

‘ The waters swelled with shoals of fish :’

particularly when we see the next page graced with the following noble *picture* :

‘ In native grace and honour clad,
With reason, courage, strength adorned,
In conscious pride elate he stands,
Erect and tall, the lord and king of all ;
His large and arched front sublime,
Declares him formed for sovereign rule,
And in his eye majestic shines emblaz’d
The soul—the image of his God.’

How many inimitable passages might not our poet Thompson furnish, not merely to ennoble our Oratorios, but even to vary our church and cathedral services—promote

devotion—cheer true piety—and wrap and sublime the soaring soul to heaven. A hymn might be found for every season of the year; and anthems innumerable, and for almost every occasion. In fact, what could have been more appropriate at our former *Musical Festival*, than the almost unknown

HYMN TO PEACE. (By Barlow.)

Hail, holy *Peace*, from thy sublime abode
 Mid circling saints that grace the throne of God !
 Before his arm, around our embryo earth,
 Stretch'd the dim void, and gave to nature birth;
 Ere morning stars his glowing chambers hung,
 Or songs of gladness woke on angel's tongue;
 Veiled in the splendours of his beamful mind,
 In blest repose thy placid form reclined,
 Lived in his life, his innate sapience caught,
 And traced and toned his universe of thought.
 Borne through th' expanse with his creating voice,
 Thy presence bade th' unfolding worlds rejoice;
 Led forth the systems on their bright career,
 Shaped all their curves, and fashioned every sphere;
 Spaced out their suns, and round each radiant goal,
 Orb over orb, compell'd their train to roll;

Bade heaven's own harmony their force combine,
 Taught all their host symphonious strains to join ;
 Gave to seraphic lyres their sounding lays,
 Their joys to angels, and to men their praise.'

And something of the nature of the following translation from the Persian by Carlyle, seems adapted also for the selections of a country Oratorio :—

The praise of Contentment and an Humble Life.

' Why should I blush that fortune's frown
 Dooms me life's humbler paths to tread ?
 To live unheeded and unknown ?
 To sink forgotten to the dead ?

'Tis not the good, the wise, the brave,
 That surest shine, or highest rise ;
 The feather sports upon the wave,
 The pearl in ocean's cavern lies.

Each lesser star that studs the sphere
 Sparkles with undiminished light :
 Dark and eclipsed alone appear
 The lord of day, the queen of night.'

P. S. Perhaps, since it cannot well afford matter for eulogy or scandal, the compliment of a passing congé, which your vocal favorite Miss S. received to day in the cathedral, from the Archbishop, may not reach you without my assistance. This politeness of his Grace appeared to give universal pleasure : as a public compliment from such a prelate, to so much talent and merit, could hardly fail to do, amid such an assembly. In mitred nobility, a mixture of condescension and gallantry seems as it should be. Yet how is it?—for I must confess that a similar testimony from the suffragan Bishop of D. would have afforded me a less unmingled satisfaction. This amiable and justly admired vocalist, I understand, is much noticed by Lady Vernon ; and passes a considerable portion of her time at the palace.

My proposed *Festal Improvements* I reserve, till another day's concoction may have benefited the crudities.

LETTER XX.



York, September 16th.

Your *date* of the 13th has just been delivered by W—— himself; who recognized me, notwithstanding some alteration in my ascetic costume, as we were mutually *squeezing* each other a little; an involuntary mode of salutation between strangers of both sexes, at present extremely *a-la-mode at York*, on entering the sacred walls of its magnificent Fane.

With regard to publishing, * * *
and I must be permitted to make some erasures.

So much do these *Musical Festivals* meet with my approbation, so much do they resemble those religious, yet festal observances,

by which *Numa* (the Roman Moses) endeavoured to humanize and socialize the bandit bands of the warlike Romulus, and to win them to the arts and enjoyments of peace; and so many excellencies do they possess, peculiarly their own; that it is most sincerely to be hoped something of a similar nature may be extended to Ireland; and her deserted Cathedrals once more echo the voice of gladness, and the hymn of praise. After the long war in which we have been engaged, scenes like these may be more necessary, even in a political point of view, than some of our politicians may suspect. In the sister kingdom, the band of patriots who should introduce and cherish them, would deserve to have their names engraven in monumental brass. All religions, at the heavenly voice of harmony, would be assembled together in the same temples, for the same charitable object, at the same religious rites, and at the same social board. Over the *mania* for continental travelling, such festivities must, doubtless,

possess the most beneficial control: whilst regattas, races, and field sports might add to the attractions of the tourist, and make the tide of British wealth, which still overflows the Continent, revert to its proper channel, and enable the peasant to fill the coffers of the peer.

‘To quell adversity, or turn her darts,
To stamp fraternity on generous hearts—
For these high motives, these illustrious ends,
Celestial *Charity* on earth descends.’

But it has already been remarked, that certain recollections and associations presented themselves to my *ascetic* imagination, not entirely in unison with the sanctitude of the place. And, in fact, what *anchoret* may *approve* of seeing those characters brought so *prominently* forward—with so much *pomp of circumstance*, and so *blazoned a name*—who nightly officiate

‘Where Angelina points the pliant toe,’

and Madame V—— personifies Don Giovanni?
Nor, when the whole congregation of church

and lay dignitaries, with their families and friends, impressively arose, as to an act of solemn reverence and devotion—could I then help mentally asking myself—‘Who, in this hallowed temple of the Deity, are the officiating priestesses and priests?’ Opera dancers and Vauxhall singers may (for aught I know) be all very well in their proper places. But is the consecrated temple of Jehovah precisely the proper place for their services? and in so ostentatious a manner too? And why has one *Vauxhall singer*, actually engaged, (or to have been engaged,) never appeared; one who has been heard a full hour after ‘night’s mid noon,’ to unite in choruses to incite the company to ‘dance and play,’ till vice

‘Became a monster of such frightful mien,
As to be hated, needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft ——.’

The subject does not merely relate to the *Charities*, or even the *City of York*. It is of national importance. And *patriotism* must

apologize for any seeming want of philanthropy, any thing of the *Elder Cato*, that may appear in these remarks.

Respecting a *Hermit's theories of improvement*: a principal feature would be the confining of the *Exotics* more to *profane subjects* within the walls of the *Concert Room*: or, at any rate, being somewhat charier and *snugger* in the use of their services within the Cathedral. *Prizes* also, for the best *Anthem* on the occasion, and the best *choruses* and *solos*, would have a most animating, interesting, and beneficial effect. A committee might adjudge these prizes; and benefited curates and

‘Apportioned maids and ’prenticed orphans bless,’

for life, the bounty that rewarded their skill? This would retain within the city and province, much of the money that is now carried off by foreigners and strangers: improve our psalmody, church music, and church going; and, in fact, be beneficial in a countless

variety of ways. On the principle of *Patriotism*, and for the drawing of every species of appropriate *national merit* into the *sunshine*; and also for the sake of the *charm of novelty*, **PRIZES** for *musical compositions* might also be given and adjudged, either in money or medals, at the option of the successful candidates: and some portion of the Festival week, both at the Minster and Music Hall, might be advantageously appropriated to the performance of the novel compositions.

If the leading veteran performers were to be chiefly rewarded by Concert benefits, it might secure an exertion to please; and seems to possess other advantages. The prizes, also, on somewhat the same principle, need not to be finally confirmed till the conclusion of the week: and if the minor performers and choruses were to have a portion of their remuneration to look forward to, in the shape of vales or gratuities, the effect might be favourable.

With the proposed alterations, and local additions, many of the present *high priests* and *priestesses* would dwindle, within the *sacred edifice*, into *secondary* objects. But, doubtless, the holy character, zeal, and unsophisticated simplicity of some of your reverend and other friends—and the absence of thought attendant upon youth and fashion in others—must have prevented their viewing the subject in the same light as

THE HERMIT OF LONDON.

P.S. To be more particular, for I find time will now admit of it—The professed public singers invited to visit York during the Festival, besides a certain stipulated *bonus*, might (as has already been hinted) have a portion of the receipts on specified days, at the Concert Room.

To prevent crowding, and to enable the neighbouring country visitants to hear the

most celebrated performers, MORNING CONCERTS, at an inferior price, might be given each day for the benefit of the leading singers: to commence at ten, and conclude at half past eleven o'clock; when the cathedral doors should be thrown open. Some abbreviation to the Oratorios, and more particularly to the evening concerts, must then become unavoidable; and produce a happy effect in the music hall. Audience and performers alike would hail the *ellipsis*—not of their amusement, or the display of their talent; but of their ennui, and their mortification. Even an anchoret can perceive little impropriety in the soliciting of almost any of the metropolitan singers, briefly to conclude the provincial performances at the cathedral. And each day it might be stated in the newspaper—for a daily paper during the week would be an acquisition—who were the successful prize candidates selected by the committee for the next day's performance, (in

solos and duets, &c.) and who were the professed singers *invited* to lend their aid to the charity.

THE END.

**W. Alexander & Son, Printers,
Castlegate, York.**

ERRATA.

Page 10 line 5, for *struggling*, read *straggling*.

— 23 — 10, for *round*, read *sound*.

— 37 bottom line, for *land*, read *upland*.

87.



